

Contemplations
UPON THE
HISTORICALL
Part of the Old
Testament.
THE
EIGHTH and LAST
VOLVME.
In two Bookes.

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Worcester.

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J. Hall.



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TO
THE HIGH AND
MIGHTY MONARCH
CHARLES,

BY

The Grace of God KING of
Great Britaine, France and
Ireland, Defender of the
Faith, &c.

*My dread Soueraigne Lord
and Master.*

May it please your Maiesly :



Now at last (thankes
be to my good God) I
have finished the
long taske of my Me-
ditations vpon the
historicall part of the Old Testament:
A Worke that I foresaw must be the
issue both of time, and thoughts. It

The Epistle

presumed to intitle it selfe at first, to your Gracious name, in succession to your immortall Brothers ; and now, it brings to your Royall hands, a due account of an happy dispatch.

Besides my owne publique ingagement, the encouragements of many worthy Diuines, both at home, and abroad, drew me on, in this pleasing, though busie, labour ; and made mee beleue the seruice would not be of more paine, then vse.

I humbly present it to your Maiestie ; not fearing to say, that in regard of the subiect, it is not so fit for any eyes as Princely ; For what doth it else but comment vpon that, which God bath thought good to say of Kings ; - what they haue done, what they shoulde haue done, how they sped in good, in evill ? Certainly there can be none such miroir

of

Dedicatory.

of Princes vnder heauen, as this,
which God hath made for the faces of
his Deputies on earth: Neither can
the eyes of Soueraigne Greatnesse be
better taken vp then with this sacred
reflection. If my defectes haue not
been notorious, the matter shall enough
commend the worke; which together
with the vnworthy Author, humbly
casts it selfe at the feet of your Maie-
sty; with the best vowes of fidelity and
obseruance, from him, that prides him-
selfe in nothing more, then in the style of

Your Maiesties
most faithfully
devoted seruant,

I O S: H A L L.

in se, quoniam sicut erat
et quod sit regnum dei. sed dicitur
et videtur. deus non videtur nisi
deus manifestetur. ergo manifestetur deus.
et manifestetur deus. et videtur deus.
et videtur deus. et manifestetur deus.
et manifestetur deus. et videtur deus.
et videtur deus. et manifestetur deus.
et manifestetur deus. et videtur deus.
et videtur deus. et manifestetur deus.
et manifestetur deus. et videtur deus.

et manifestetur deus.

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et manifestetur deus.

et manifestetur deus.

Contemplations.

The 20th Booke.

- 1 The Shunamite suing to Iehoram :
Elisha conferring with Hazael.
- 2 Iehu with Iehoram and Iezabel.
- 3 Iehu killing the sonnes of Abab, and
the Priests of Baal.
- 4 Athaliah and Ioash.
- 5 Ioash with Elisha dying.
- 6 Vzziah leprous.
- 7 Ahaz with his new Altar.
- 8 The vtter destruction of the King-
dome of Israel.
- 9 Hezekiah and Senacherib.
- 10 Hezekiah sicke, recovered, visited.
- 11 Manasseh.
- 12 Iosiahs reformation.
- 13 Iosiahs death, with the desolation of
the Temple and Ierusalem.

anobilitatis

et longioribus

: nunc est et primus annus
descendit ex coronula
litterarum huiusmodi dicitur
tunc dicitur quod est et primus

anno p. annus

anno secundus

anno tertius

anno quartus

anno quintus

anno sextus

anno septimus

anno octavus

anno nonus

anno decimus

anno undevigesimus

anno vicesimus

anno trigesimus

anno quadagesimus

anno quinquagesimus

anno sexagesimus

anno septuagesimus

anno octuagesimus

anno nonagesimus

anno centesimus



Contemplations.

*The SHUNAMITE suing to
LEHORAM, ELISHA con-
ferring with HAZAEL.*



Ow royally hath E-
lisha paid the Shu-
namite for his lod-
ging! To him al-
ready she owes the
life of her sonne, both given, and
restored; and now againe (after
so many yeares, as might well
have worne out the memory of

2 Kings 2.

B

fo

so small a courtesie) her selfe, her sonne, her family owe their liues to so thankfull a guest. That table, and bed, and stoole, and candlesticke was well bestowed : That candlesticke repaid her the light of her future life and condition , that table the meanes of maintenance, that stoole a seat of safe abode , that bed a quiet rest from the common calamities of her nation : Hee is a niggard to himselfe , that scants his beneficence to a Prophet , whose very cold water shall not go vntrewar- ded. *Elijah* preserued the *Sareptan* from famine; *Elisha* the *Shun- mite*; he, by prouision of oyle and meale; this, by premonition : *A- rise, and goo, thou and thine houſhold, and ſojourne whereſoever thou canſt ſojourne.*

sojourne. The Sareptan was poore, and driuen to extremes, therefore the Prophet prouides for her, from hand to mouth: The Shunamite was wealthy, and therfore the Prophet sends her to prouide for her selfe: The same goodnes that relieves our necessity, leaues our competency to the hand of our owne counsell; in the one, he will make vse of his owne pow-er, in the other, of our prouidence.

The very Prophet aduises this holy Client to leaue the bounds of the Church: and to seeke life, where she should not finde religion: Extremity is for the time a iust dispensation with some com-mon rules of our outward de-meantire, and motions, eten from
airT

better to worse. All *Israel* and *Iudeah* shall be affamished; The body can be preserued no where, but where the soule shall want; Sometimes the conueniences of the soule must yeeld to bodily necessities. Wantonnesse and curiositie can finde no aduantage from that which is done out of the power of need.

It is a long famine that shall afflict *Israel*; Hee vpon whom the spirit of *Elijah* was doubled, doubled the judgement inflicted by his Master; Three yeares and an halfe did *Israel* gaspe vnder the drought of *Elijah*; seauen yeares dearth shall it suffer vnder *Elisha*. The tryals of God are many times not more grieuous for their sharpe[n]esse, then for their continuance.

This

This scarcity shall not come alone; God shall call for it: what euer be the second cause, he is the first. The executioners of the Almighty (such are his judgments) stand ready waiting vpon his iust Throne; and doe no sooner receiue the watch-word, then they flye vpon the world, and plague it for sinne; Onely the cry of our finnes moues God to call for vengeance: And if God once call, it must come; How oft, how earnestly are we called to repentance, and stir not the messengers of Gods wrath flye forth at the least becke; and fulfill the will of his reuenge vpon those, whose obediencie would not fulfill the will of his command.

After so many proofes of fide-

sion,

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litie

licie the Shunamite cannot distrust the Prophet; not staying therefore to be convicted by the event, she remoues her family into the Land of the Philistins: No nation was more opposite to *Israel*, none more worthily odious; yet, there doth the Shunamite seeke, & finde shelter; Euen the shade of those trees that are vnwholsome, may keepe vs from a storne; Every where will God finde roome for his owne. The fields of *Pbili-stins* flourish, whiles the soyle of *Israel* yeelds nothing but weeds and barrennesse: Not that *Israel* was more sinfull, but that the sin of *Israel* is more intolerable, The offers of grace are so many aggrauations of wickednesse: In equall offences those doe iustly smart more,

more, who are more obliged. No pestilence is so contagious as that which hath taken the purest ayre.

These *Philistine* neighbours would neuer haue endured them-selues to be pestered with forrainers; especially *Israelites*, whom they hated (besides religion) for their usurpation: neyther were they in all likelihood pressed with multitude: The rest of *Israel* were led on with hopes; presuming vpon the amends of the next haruest, till their want grew desperate, and irremediable; onely the forwarned *Shunamite* preventes the mischiefe; now she findes what it is to haue a Prophet her friend: Happy are those soules that vpon all occasions consult with Gods Seers; they shall be freed from the

plagues, wherein the secure blindness of others is heedlessly undertaken. longis nonas ibidem
etiam. Seuen years had this Shunamite dwelt in Palestine; now she returnd to her owne; and is excluded. She that found harbour among Philistines, findes oppression and violence among Israelites. Those of her kinred, taking advantage of her absence, had shareid her possessions. Howe loſt doth it fall out that the avortencies of a man are thofe of his owne house? All went by comtraries with this Shunamite; In the famine that hap enough; in the chynon, plenty she was starved; Poorly were kindred to her, if not all together; Both our fears, and our hopes, are not seldomie well appointed.

LIB. 2d. The Shunamite suing, &c.

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appoint vs; It is safe trusting to
that stay which can neuer faile vs;
who can easilie prouide vs bothe
of friendship in *Palestine*, and of
justice in *Israel*. Wee may not
judge of the religion by particular
actions; A very *Philistine* may be
mercifull, when an *Israelite* is mi-
nist; The person may be faulty,
when the profession is holy.

It was not long since the Pro-
phet made that friendly offe^r to
the *Shunamite*; out of the desire of
a thankfull requitall, What is to
be done for thee? Wouldest thou be of-
fered to the King, or to the Captaine
of the Host? and she answered, I
dwelle among my brethren! Little did
she then think of this injuridis
measure; else she might haue said,
I dwelle among thine enemies, I

Spend

dwell

dwell amongst robbers. It is like they were then friendly, who were now cruell, and oppresiuie; There is no trust to be reposed in flesh and blood : How should their fauors be constant, who are in their nature, and disposition, variable ? It is the surest way to relye on him, who is euer like himselfe ; the measure of whose loue is eternitie.

Whither should the Shunamite goe to complaine of her wrong, but to the Court? There is no other refuge of the oppressed, but publike authoritie: All Iustice is derived from Soueraignty: Kings are not called Gods for nothing. They doe both sentence and execute for the Almighty.

I Doubtless, now the poore
Shunamite

Shunamite thought of the courteous profer of *Elisha*, and missing a friend at the Court, is glad to be the presenter of her owne petition.

How happily doth God contrive all euents for the good of his! This suppliant shall fall vpon that instant for her suit, when the King shall bee talking with *Gehezi*; when *Gehezi* shall bee talking of her, to the King; The words of *Gehezi*, the thoughts of the King, the desires of the Shunamite shall be all drawne together by the wise prouidence of God into the center of one moment, that his oppressed seruant might receiue a speedy iustice. Oh the infinite wisedome, power, mercy of our God, that insensibly

bly orders all our wayes, as to his
ewne holy purposnes, so to our
best advantage.

What doth Iehoram the King
talking with Gehezi the Leper ?
That very presence was an eye-
sore.

But if the cohabitation with
the infectious were forbidden,
yet not the conference. Certainly,
I begin to think of some good-
nesse in both these : Had there
not beeene some goodness in Ie-
horam, he had not taken pleasure
to heare, evien from a leprous
mouth, the miraculous acts and
praises of Gods Prophet ; Had
there not beeene some goodness
in Gehezi, he had not after so fear-
full an infliction of judgment,
thus ingenuously recounted the
praises

praises of his feuere Master; Hee
that told that deare-bought lye to
the Prophet, tells now all truths
of the Prophet, to the King: Per-
haps his leprosie had made him
cleane; If so: Happy was it for
him that his forehead was white
with the disease, if his soule be-
came hereupon white with re-
pentance. But wee may well
know that the desire, or report
of historicall Truths, doth not
alwayes argue grace. Still *Iehoram*,
after the inquiry of the Prophets
miracles, continues his Idolatry.
He that was curious to harken af-
ter the wonders of *Elisha*, is not
carefull to follow his doctrine;
Therefore are *Gehezi* and the *Shu-*
namite met before him, that hee
may be conuicted, who will noe
be

be reformed : Why was it els that the presence of the persons should thus unexpectedly make good the relation , if God had not meant the inexcusableness of *Iehoram* ; whiles he must needs say within himselfe ; Thus potent is the Prophet of that God, whom I obey not ; Were not *Elishaes*, the true God, how could hee worke such wonders ? And if he be the true God , why is he not mine ? But what ? Shall I change *Ahab*s God for *Iehosaphats* ? No ; I cannot deny the miracles, I will not admit of the author : Let *Elisha* be powerfull, I will be constant O wretched *Iehoram* ; how much better had it been for thee never to have seene the face of *Gebezij* and the sonnes of the *Shunahite* ; then to bee away

away vnmoued with the vengeance of leprosie in the one, with the mercifull resuscitation of the other? Therfore is thy iudgment fearfully aggrauated, because thou wouldst not yeeld to what thou couldst not oppose. Had not *Ahab's* obdurateenesse beeene propagated to his sonne, so powerfull demonstrations of diuine power could not haue been vneffectuall. Wicked hearts are so much worse by how much God is better; This anvile is the harder by being continually beaten vpon, whether with iudgments, or mercy.

Yet this good vse will God haue made of this report, and this presence, that the poore *Shunamite* shall haue iustice; That sonne, whose life was restored, shall haue

haue his inheritance reuiued; His estate shall fare the better for Elishaes miracle: How much more will our mercifull God second his owne blessings, when the fauors of vniust men are therefore drawne to vs, because wee haue bee[n]e the subiects of diuine beneficence.

It was a large, and full award, that this occurrence drew from the King; *Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field, since the day that she left the land, even vntill now.* Not the present possession onely is given her, but the areages.

Nothing hinders, but that outward Justice may stand with grosse Idolatry. The Widow may thanke Elisha for this; His i[n]miracle
wrought

wrought still; and put this new life into her dead estate; His absence did that for the preservation of life, which his presence did for the restoring it from death. Shee that was so ready to expostulate with the man of God, vpon the losse of her sonne, might perhaps haue beeene as ready to impute the losse of her estate to his aduice; Now, that for his sake shee is enriched with her owne, how doth shee blesse God for so happy a guest? When we haue forgotten our owne good turnes, God remembres and crownes them: Let vs do good to all whiles we haue time, but especially to the houehold of faith.

Could *Israel* haue beeene sensible of their owne condition, it

C

was

was no small vnhappinesse to lose
the presence of *Elisha*: Whether,
for the Idolatries, or for the fa-
mine of *Israel*, the Prophet is gone
into *Syria*; No doubt *Naaman*
welcomd him thither; and now
would force vpon him those
thankes for his cure, which the
man of God would not receiue at
home.

How famous is he now grown
that wastaken from the Teame?
His name is not confined to his
owne Nation; Forraine countries
take notice of it; and Kings are
glad to listen after him, and wooe
him vwith prefets. *Benhadad* the
King of *Syria*, whose counsell he
had detected, reioycteth to heare
of his presence; and now, as ha-
ving forgotten that he had sent a

whole

vwhole host, to besiege the Prophet in *Dothan*, sends an honorable messenger to him, laden with the burden of fourty Carruels, to consult with this Oracle, concerning his sicknesse, and recovery.

This *Syrian* belike in his distresse dares not trust to his owne gods; but hauing had good proofe of the power of the God of *Israe*l, both in *Naamans* cure, and in the miraculous defeats of his greatest forces, is glad to send to that seruant of God, whom he had persecuted. Wicked men are not the same in health and in sicknesse: their affliction is worthy of the chankes, if they be well-minded; not themselues.

Doubtlesse the errand of *Ben-hadad* was not onely to inquire of

the issue of his disease, but to require the prayers of the Prophet for a good issue: Euen the worst man doth so loue himselfe, that hee can be content to make a beneficiall vse of those instruments, whose goodnesse he hateth.

Hazael, the chiefe Peete of Syria is designed to this message; The wealth of his present striues with the humility of his cariage, and speech: *Iby sonne Benhadad King of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?* Not long since, *Iehoram King of Israel* had said to *Elisha, My father, shall I smite them;* and now *Benhadad King of Syria, sayes, My father, shall I recover:* Lo how this poore Mebolathite hath Kings to his sons: How great is the honor of Gods

Pro-

Prophets with Pagans , with Princes ? Who can bee but confounded to see Euangelicall Prophets despised by the meanest Christians ?

It is more then a single answer that the Prophet returnes to this message : One answer he giues to *Benhadad*, that sent it ; another hee giues to *Hazael*, that brings it : That to *Benhadad*, is, *Thou maiest surely recover* ; That to *Hazael*, *The Lord hath shewed me that he shall surely dye*: What shall we say then ? Is there a lye, or an equiuocation in the holy mouth of the Prophet ? God forbid : It is one thing what shall be the nature, and issue of the disease ; Another thing what may outwardly befall the person of *Benhadad* : The questi-

on is moued of the former; whereto the answser is direct; The disease is not mortall; But withall an intimation is giuen to the bearer, of an euent beyond the reach of his demand; which hee may know, but eyther needs not, or may not returne: *The Lord hath shewed me that he shall surely dye;* by another meanes, though not by the disease.

The Seer of God descries more in *Hazaell*, then hee could see in himselfe; hee fixes his eyes therefore stedfastly in the *Syrians* face, as one that in those lines read the bloody story of his life.

Hazaell blushes, *Elisha* weepes; The intention of those eyes did not so much amaze *Hazaell*, as the teares; As yet he vvas not guilty to him-

himselfe of any wrong that might
straine out this iuyce of sorrow:
Why weepeth my Lord?

The Prophet feares not to fore-
tell *Hazaell* all the villanies which
he shoulde once do to *Israel*; How
he shoulde fire their forts, and kill
their yong men, and rip the mo-
thers, and dash the children. I
maruell not now at the teares of
those eies which foresaw this mi-
serable vastation of the inheri-
tance of God; The very mention
whereof is abhorred of the fu-
ture author: *What is thy seruant a
dog, that I should doe this great thing?*
They are sauage cruelties where-
of thou speakest; It were more
fit for mee to weepe that thou
shouldest repute mee so brutish; I
should no lesse condern me my
selfe

selfe for a beast, if I could suspect my owne degeneration so farre. Wicked men are carryed into those heights of impiety, which they could not in their good mood haue possibly beleeuued; Nature is subiect to fauourable opinions of it selfe; and will rather mistrust a Prophet of God, then her owne good disposition: How many from honest beginnings, haue ri- sen to incredible licentiousnesse, whose liues are now such, that it were as hard for a man to be-leeue they had euer beene good, as to haue perswaded them once they should proue so despera- ly ill.

To give some ouverture vnto *Hazaell* of the oportunitie of this ensuing mischiefe; the Prophet fore-

foretells him from God, that hee
shall be the King of Syria.

He that shewes the euent, doth
not appoint the meanes; Far was
it from the spirit of Gods Pro-
phet to set, or encourage a trea-
son: whiles hee said therefore,
Thou shalt be King of Syria; he said
not, Goe home, and kill thy ma-
ster: The wicked ambition of
Hazaell drawes this damnable
conclusion out of holy premises;
and now hauing fed the hopes of
his Soueraigne with the expecta-
tion of recoverie; the next day he
smothers his Master. The impo-
tent desire of rule brookes no de-
lay: Had not *Hazaell* been grace-
lessly cruell, after hee had receiuied
this prediction of the Seer, hee
should haue patiently awaited for
the

the crowne of Syria, till lawfull
meanes had set it vpon his head ;
now, he will by a close execution
make way to the throne ; A wet
cloth hath stopt the mouth of his
sicke Soueraigne ; No noyse is
heard ; the carcasse is faire ; Who
can complaine of any thing but
the disease ?

O Hazael, thou shalt not thus
easily stop the mouth of thine
owne conscience ; that shall call
thee Traytor, euen in thy chaire
of state ; and shall checke all thy
royall triumphs, with, *Thou hast
founded thy throne in blood.* I am de-
ceiued if this wet cloth shall not
wipe thy lips in thy iollyest feasts,
and make thy best morsells vnsa-
vory : Soueraignty is painfull vp-
on the fairest termes ; but vpon
trechery,

trechery, and murder, tormenting : Wofull is the case of that man whose publike cares are aggravated with priuate guiltiness; and happy is he , that can enjoy a little with the peace of an honest heart.

I E H V

**I E H V with I E H O R A M and
I E Z E B E L.**

1 Kings 9.



Et *Hazaël* began his cruelty with losse : *Ramoth Gilead* is won from him; *Ieboram* the son hath recouered that, which *Ahab* his father attempted in vaine ; That City was dear-bought of *Israel*; it cost the life of *Ahab*, the blood of *Ieboram* ; Those wounds were healed with victory ; The King tends his health at *Iezreel*, whiles the Captaines were enjoying, and seconding their successe at *Ramoth*.

Old

Old *Elisha* hath neither cotage,
nor foot of land, yet sitting in an
obscure corner, he giues order for
Kingdomes ; Not by way of au-
thority (this usurpation had been
no lesse proud, then vnjust.) but
by way of message, from the God
of kings ; Even a meane Herald
may goe on a great errand : The
Prophets of the Gospell haue no-
thing to doe but with spirituall
Kingdoms, To beate downe the
kingdomes of sinne and Satan; to
translate soules to the Kingdome
of heauen.

Hee that renued the life of the
Shunamites sonne, must stoope to
age ; That blocke lies in his way
to *Iehu* ; The aged Prophet im-
ployes a speedier messenger, who
must also gird vp his loynes, for
haſt :

haſt : No common pace will ſerue vs when we goe on Gods message ; The very loſſe of mi-
nutes may be vñrecouerable. This
great Seer of God wel ſaw a pre-
ſent concurrence of all oportuni-
ties : The Captaines of the Host
were then readily combined for
this exploit : the Army was on
foot ; *Iehoram* abſent ; a ſmall de-
lay might haue troubled the
work ; the diſperſion of the Cap-
taines, and Host , or the preſence
of the King , might eyther haue
defeated, or ſlacked the diſpatch :
He is prodigall of his ſucceſſe, that
is ſlow in his execution.

The directions of *Eliſa* to the
young Prophet, are full, and pun-
ctually : whither to goe ; what to
cary ; what to doe ; where to doe
it ;

it; what to say, what speed to make, in his act, in his returne: In the busynesses of God it matters not how little is left to our discretion; There is no important busynesse of the Almighty, wherin his precepts are not strict, and expresse; Looke how much more specialty there is in the charge of God, so much more danger is in the violation.

The young Prophet is curiously obedient; in his haste; in his obseruation and carriage; and finding *Iehu*, according to *Elishas* prediction, set amongst the Captaines of the Host, he singles him forth, by a reverent compellation; *I haue an errand to thee, O Captaine;* Might not the Prophet haue stayed till the table had risen, and then haue

haue followed Iehu to his lodg-
ing? Surely, the wisdome of God
hath purposely pitcht vpon this
season, that the publike view of
a sacred messenger, and the hasty
euocation of so noted a person, to
such a secrecy; might prepare the
hearts of those Commanders of
Israel, to the expectation of some
great designe.

The inmost roome is but close
enough for this act; Ere many
houres, all *Israel* shall know that,
which yet may not bee trusted
with one eye; The goodnesse of
God makes wise prouision for
the safety of his messengers, and
whiles he imploys their seruice,
prevents their dangers.

But how is it that of all the
Kings of the Ten tribes, none
was

was euer anointed but *Iehu*? Is it for that the God , who would not countenance the erection of that vsurped throne,would countenance the alteration ? Or is it, that by this visible testimony of diuine ordination, the courage of the *Israelitish* Captaunes might be raised vp to second the high and bold attempt of him,whom they saw destin'd from heauen to rule ?

Together with the oyle of this vunction, here was a charge of reuenge; A reuenge of the blood of the Prophets ; vpon *Iezabel*; of wickednesse and Idolatry, vpon *Abab*: neither was the extirpation of this leud family fore-prophefied onely to *Iehu*, but inioyned.

Elijah foretold, and the world

D

ex-

expected some fearfull account of the abominable cruelty, and impiety of that accursed house; Now it is called for, when it seemed forgotten : *Ahab* shall haue no posterity, *Iezabel* shall haue no toomb, but the doggs. This woful doome is committed to *Iehu*es execution.

Oh the sure, though patient, iustice of the Almighty : Not only *Ahab* and *Iezabel* had beene bloody, and idolatrous, but *Israel* was drawne into the partnership of their crimes ; All these shall share in the judgment : *Elijahs* complaint in the case now receiuers this late answyer, *Hazaell* shall plague *Israel*; *Iehu* shall plague the house of *Ahab* and *Iezabel*; *Elisha*s servant thus secketh *Elijahs* master :

ster: When wickednes is ripe in the field, God will not let it sheed to grow againe, but cuts it vp by a iust, and seasonable vengeance: Ahab's drouping vnder the threat hath put off the iudgment from his owne dayes; now it comes, and sweepes away his wife, his issue; and falls heauy vpon his subiects. Please your selues, o ye vaine sinners, in the slow pace of vengeance; it will be neither lesse certaine, nor more easie for the delay; rather it will pay for that leasure in the extremitie.

The Prophet hath done his errand, and is gone. Iehu returnes to his fellowes, with his head not more wet with oyle, then blisfed with thoughts: no doubt, his face bewrayed some inward trou-

D 2 mults,

mults, and distractions of imagination ; neyther seem'd hee to returne the same he went out. They aske therefore, *Is all well? Wherefore came this mad fellow to thee?* The Prophets of God were to these idolatrous *Israelites*, like comets ; who were neuer seene without the portendement of a mischiefe : When the priests of their *Baal* were quietly sacrificing, all was well ; but now when a Prophet of God comes in sight, their guiltinesse askes, *Is all well?* All would be well but for their sinnes ; they feare not these, they feare their reprover.

Israel was come to a good passe, when the Prophets of God went with them for mad men : Oh ye *Baalitish Ruffians*, whither hath

hath your impiety and profaneness caryed you, that ye shoulde thus blasphemē the seruants of the liuing God ? Yet that run on mad-ding after vaine Idols, taxe the sober guides of true worship, for madnesse. Thus it becomes the godlesse enemies of truth, the heralds of our patience, to mis-call our innocence, to reuile our most holy profession: What wonder is it that Gods messengers are mad men vnto those, to whom the wisedome of God is foolishnes ?

The message was not deliu-
red to *Iehu* for a concealment, but
for publication: Silence could not
effect the word that was told
him; common notice must; *Yee
know the man, and his communication:*
The habit showes you the man;

D 3 the

the calling shewes you his errād :
Euen Prophets were distinguishe-
ed by their clothes ; Their mantle
was not the common weare ;
why shoulde not this sacred voca-
tion be knowne by a peculiar at-
tyre ? These Captaines had not
callid him a mad-man, if they had
not knowne him a Prophet : By
the man therefore they might
guesse at his message ; Prophets
doe not vse to appeare, but vpon
serious errands ; whether of re-
proofe, or of prediction.

Nice ciuities of denials were
not then knowne to the world ;
They said, *It is false, tell vs now :*
Amongst these Captains no com-
bat, no vnkindnesse followes vp
on a word so rudely familiar.

Iehu needs not tell them, that

the man was a Prophet; hee tells them the prophesie of the man; what he had said, what hee had done.

Their eies had no sooner seene the oyle, their eares had no sooner heard, *Thus saith the Lord, I haue unointed thee King ouer Israel,* then they rise from their seates, as rapt with a tempest, and are hurled into armes; So doe they hast to proclame Iehu, that they scarce stay to snatch vp their garments, which they had perhaps left behind them for speed, had they not meant with these rich abiliments to garnish a state for their new Soueraigne; To whom hauing now erected an extemporall Throne, they doe by the sound of Trumpets giue the style of

Royalty, *Iehu is King.*

So much credit hath that mad fellow with these gallants of *Israel*, that vpon his word they will presently aduenture their liues, & change the Crowne. God giues a secret authority to his despised seruants ; so as they which hate their person , yet reverence their truth : Euen very scorners cannot but beleue them ; If when the Prophets of the Gospell tell vs of a spirituall Kingdome, they be distrusted of those which professe to obserue them, how shamefull is the disproportion? how iust shall their iudgment be ?

Yet I cannot say whether meer obedience to the Prophet, or personall dislikes of *Iehoram*, or partiell respects to *Iehu*, drew the Captaines

taines of *Israel*; The will of God may be done thanklesly, when fulfilling the substance, we faile of the intention, and erre in circumstance.

Onely *Ramoth* is conscious of this sudden Inauguration; This new prince-dome yet reaches no further then the sound of the trumpet: *Iehu* is no lesse subtile, then valiant; he knew that the notice of this unexpected change might worke a busie, and dangerous resistance; he therfore giues order that no messenger of the newes may preuent his personall execution, that so he might surprise *Ieboram* in his palace of *Izreel*, whether tending his late wounds, or securely feasting his friends, and dreaming of nothing lesse

lesse then danger; and might be
seenie, and felt at once. Secretie is
the safest gard of any designe; dis-
closed projects are either frustra-
ted, or made needlesly difficult.

Neither is *Iehu* more close, then
swift; That very trumpet with
the same wind sounds his march;
from the toppe of the staires, he
steps downe into his charet; That
man meanes to speed, who can
bee at once reserued in his coun-
sels, and resolute and quicke in
his performances.

Who could but pity the vnhap-
py and vnseasonable visitation of
the grand-childe of *Iehosaphat*,
were it not that hee was degene-
rate into the family of *Abab*? *A-*
baziah King of *Iudah* is come to
visit *Iehoram* King of *Israel*; the
know-

knowledge of his late received
wounds hath drawn thither this
kind ill-matched allie: He who
was partner of the warre, cannot
but be a visitor of the wounds.

The two Kings are in the
height of their complement, and
entertainments, when the watch-
man of the Tower of Izreel espies
a troupe, a farre off. For ought
was knowne, there was nothing
but peace in all the Land of Israel,
and Judah was now so combined
with it, that both their Kings
were feasting vnder one roofe;
yet, in the midst of this supposed
safety, the watch-tower is not vn-
furnished with heedy eyes: No
securitie of peace can free wise
Gouvernors from a carefull suspi-
tion of what may come, and a
finisht

pro-

prouidence against the worst. Euen whiles we know of no enemies, the watch-tower of due intelligence may not be empty.

In vaine are dangers fore-seen, if they be not premonished; It is all one to haue a blind and a mute watch-man; This speakes what he sees; *I see a company.*

Doubtlesse *Iehoram* head was now full of thoughts; neither knew hee what construction to put vpon this approaching troupe; Perhaps, the *Syrians* (hee thinkes) may haue recovered *Ramoth*; and chased the garrison of *Israel*; neither can hee imagine whether these should be hostile victors, or vanquished subiects, or conspiring rebels. Every way this rout was dreadfull. Oh *Iehoram*, thou beginst

beginſt thy feares too late; Hadſt thou beene afraid to prouoke the God of *Israel*, thine innocency had yeelded no roome to theſe terrors.

An horſeman is diſpatcht to diſcouer the meaning of thiſ deſcryed concurſe: Hee meets them, and inquires of peace; but receiuſeſ a ſhort anſwer, *What haſt thou to doe with peace? turne thee bebind mee?* A ſecond is ad-drefſed; with the ſame ſucceſſe: Both attend the traïne of *Iebu* in ſtead of returning; Indeed, it is not for priuate perſons to hope to rectifie the publike affaires, when they are growne to an height of diſorder, and from thence to a ripenesse of miſ-carriage: Sooner may a well-meaning man hurt him-

himselfe, then redresse the common danger.

These messengers were now within the mercy of a multitude, had they but indeuored to retire, they had perished as wilfully, as vainly: Whosoever will be striuing against the torrent of a iust judgment, must needs bee caried downe in the stremme: Sometimes there is as much wisedome in yeelding, as courage in resistance.

Had this troupe beene farrre off, the watchman could not haue descried the arrivall of the messengers, their turning behind, the manner of the march; *Iebi* was a noted Captaine, his cariage and motion was observed more full of fire, then his fellowes; The mid
driuing

driving is like Iehues; for hee driueth furiously: God makes choyce of fit instruments, as of mercy, so of reuenge; These spirits were needfull for so tragicall a scene, as was now preparing in Israel.

Iehoram and *Abaziah*, as nettled with this forced patience of expectation, can no longer keepe their seates; but will needs hasten their charters, and fetch that costly satisfaction, which would not be sent, but giuen.

They are infatuated, which shall perish; otherwised *Iehoram* had beeene warned enough by the forceable retention of his messengers, to expect none but an enemy. A friend, or a subiect could not haue beeene vnwilling to bee knowne, to be lookest for; Now, for-

forgetting his wounds, he will go to fetch death.

Yet when he sees *Iehu*, whom he left a subject, hopes striue with his doubts, *Is it peace, Iehu?* what may be the reason of this sudden iourney? Is the army foyled by the *Syrians*? Is *Ramoth* recovered? or hath the flight of the enemy left thee no further worke? or is some other ill newes guilty of thy haft? What meanes this vnwished presence, and returne?

There needs no stay for an answer. The very face of *Iehu*, and those sparkling eyes of his speake fury, and death to *Iehoram*, which yet his tongue angrily seconds: *What peace, so long as the whordomes of thy mother Iezabel, and her witchcrafts are so many?*

Wicked

Wicked Tyran, what speakeſt thou of peace with me? when thou haſt thus long waged warre with the Almighty? That curſed motheſt of thine hath purſed thee with blood, and traɪned thee up in abominable Idolatries!

Thou art not more heis, then her ſinne is thine; thou art polluted with her ſpirituall whoredomes, and inchantment with her helliſh witchcrafts. Now that iuſt God whom thou, and thy parents haue ſo haimonfly despieted, ſends thee by me this laſt meſſage of his vengeance, which whileſt hee ſpake, his hand is drawing vp that deadly arrow, which ſhall cure the former wounds with a wonderfull ſcure.

Took adoe doth heatched

dad

E

Iehoram

Iehoram turne his charet, and flee; and cry Treason, o *Ahabiah*; There was treason before, o *Iehoram*; thy treason against the Maiesty of God, is now revenged by the treason of *Iehu* against thee.

That fatall shaft, notwithstanding standing the swift pace of both the charets, is directed to the heart of *Iehoram*; there is no erring of those feathers which are guided by the hand of destinie.

How iust are the judgments of God! It was in the field of *Naboth*, whetein *Iehoram* met with *Iehu*; That very ground called to him for blood; And now this new avenger remembers that prophesie which he heard from the mouth of *Elijah*, in that very place following the hodes of *Ahab*;

hab; and is carefull to performe it. Little did *Iehu* thinke, when he heard that message of *Elijah*, that his hands should act it now, as zealous of accomplishing the word of a Prophet; hec gives charge to *Bidkar* his Captaine, that the bleeding carkasse of *Ieboram* should be cast vpon that very platt of *Naboth*: Oh *Naboths* blood well paid for! *Ahabs* blood is licked by dogs, in the very place where those dogs lickt *Naboths*; *Ieborams* blood shall manure that ground, which was wrung from *Naboth*; and *Iezebel* shall adde to this compost. Oh garden of hearbes dearly bought, royally dunged.

What a resemblance there is betwixt the death of the father,

E. 2 and

and the sonne, *Ahab* and *Iehoram*? Both are slaine in their charet; Both with an arrow. Both repay their blood to *Naboth*; and how perfect is this retaliation? Not only *Naboth* miscaried in that cruell iniustice, but his sonnes also; else the inheritance of the vineyard had descended to his heires, notwithstanding his pretended offence; and now not only *Ahab* forfaits his blood to this field, but his sonne *Iehoram* also? Face doth not more answer to face, then punishment to sinne.

It was time for *Ahaziah* King of *Juda*, to flee: Nay it had beeene time long before to haue fled from the sins, yea from the house of *Ahab*; That brand is fearfull which God sets vpon him; Flee

did euill in the sight of the Lord as did the house of Ahab; for he was the sonne in lawe of the house of Ahab. Affinity is too often guilty of corruption; The son of good Iehosaphat is lost in Ahabs daughter.

Now hee payes for his kinde alliance; accompanying the son of Ahab in his death, whom hee consorted with in his Idolatry; Yong Abaziah was scarce ywarmed in his throne when the mis-matched blood of Athaliah is required from him; Nothing is more dangerous then to be imped in a wicked family; this relation too often drawes in a share both of sin and punishment.

Who would not haue looked that Iezebel hearing of this bloody

end of her son; and pursuit of her
allye; and the fearefull proceedings
of this prosperous conspiracy,
should haue put her selfe into
lack-cloth and ashes; and now
finding no meanes either of de-
fence, or escape, should haue cast
her selfe into such a posture of
humiliation, as might haue mo-
ued the compassion of Iehu; Her
proud heart could not suddenly
fearne to stoope: rather she re-
collects her high spirits, and in
stead of humbling her foule by
repentance, and addressing her
selfe for an imminent death; she
pranks vp her old carkeffe, and
paints her wrinkled face, and as
one that vainly hopes to daunt
the courage of an usurper, by the
sudden beames of Malice; she
lookes

lookes out, and thinks to fright him with the challenge of a traitor, whose either mercy, or iustice could not be auoide : Extremite findes vs such as our peace leaues vs ; Our last thoughts are spent vpon that wee care most for, those that haue regarded their face more then their spoule, in their latter end are more taken vp with desite of seeming faire, then being happy : It is no maruell if an heart obdured with the custome of sinne shut vp gracelessly, Counterfaic beauty agrees well with inward vngleanesse.

Iehu's resolution was too strongly sealed to bee remoued with a painted face, or an opprobrious tongue; He lookes vp to the window, and sayes, Who is on

my side, who? There want not
thoſe elsewhere, which will
be ready to obſerue preuailing
greatneſſe: Two or three En-
glands look out; He bids them,
Throw her downe: They iſtantly
lay hold on their lately adored
Mistres, and notwithstanding all
her thicks and prayars, cast her
downe headlong into the ſunda.

What heed is to be taken of the
deepe profeffed ſeruices of hol-
low harted followers? All this
while they haue with humble
ſmiles, and officious deuotions
fawned vpon their great Queene;
now vpon the call of a proſper-
ous enemy, they forget their re-
ſpects, her roialty, and cast her
downe, as willing executioners,
into the iawes of a fearefull death?

It is hard for greatnesse to know them whom it may trust: Per-
haps the fairest semblance is from the falsest heart; It was a iust
plague of God vpon wicked Je-
zebel, that shee was inwardly ha-
ted of her owne. He whose ser-
uants she persecuted, raised up
nemes to her from her owne
elbow. as wel yd he remised her.
Thus must pride fall. Insolent,
idolatrous, cruelle Jezebel besprin-
kles the walls, and pauement
with her blood; and now those
braines that devised mischiefe a-
gainst the seruants of God, are
strawed vpon the stones; and
she that insulted vpon the Pro-
phets, is trampled vpon byt the
horses heeles: The wicked is kept
for the day of destruction, and shall be
brought

brought forth to the day of wrath.

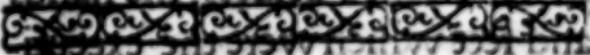
Death puts an end common-
ly to the hyest displeasure. He that
was seuer in the execution of the
living, is mercifull in the sepulture
of the dead ; Goe see now this cur-
sed woman, and bury her, for she is a
Kings daughter ; She that vpbray-
ded Iehu with the name of Zimri,
shall be interred by Iehu as Omries
daughter in law, as a Sydonian
Princess ; Somewhat must bee
yeelded to humanity; somewhat
to State.

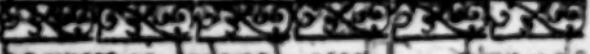
The dogs haue preuented Lebs
in this purpose, and haue giuen
her a liuing to emb more ignoble,
then the worst of the earth ; Onely
the scull, hands, and feet of that
vanished carcasse yet remaine ;
The scull which was the rofe of

all

all her wicked deuices, the hands
and feet which were the executi-
oners; these shall remaine as the
monuments of those shamefull
exequies: that future times seeing
these fragments of a body, might
say, The dogges were worthy of
the rest; Thus Jezebel is turned
to dung, and dogs meat; Elijah is
verified, Naboth is revenged; Je-
zebel is purged, Ahab is zealous, and
in all, God is just.

Let COUNS of
KINGDOME of YHWH
be to make q[ui]te; The chiefe
personis, by whom
are nowh brougt up
T E M V

aboued art assynd his hyspe and his


He is vni kylling the sonnes of
A H A B, and the Priests

 of **B A A L**.

1 Kings 10.



Here were two
 primey Cities of
 the Ten Tribes,
 whiche were the
 set Courts of the

Kingdome of *Israel*; *Samaria* and
Iezreel; The chiefe palace of the
 King was *Iezreel*, the mother Ci-
 ty of the Kingdome, was *Samaria*;
Iehu is possessed of the one, with-
 out any sword drawne against
 him; *Iezreel* willingly changes the
 master, yeelding it selfe to the
 victor

victor of two Kings, to the
venger of Jezebel; the next care is
Samaria. Either policy, or force
shall fetch in that head of the
Tribes.

The plentifull issue of Princes
is no small assurance to the peo-
ple; *Ahab* had sonnes enough to
furnish the Thrones of all the
neighbour nations, to maintaine
the hopes of succession, to all
times; How secure did he think
the perpetuation of his posterity,
when he saw seuenty sons from
his owne loynes? Neither was
this Royall issue trusted, either to
weake walls, or to one roofe,
but to the strong bulwarkes of
Samaria, and therein to the seve-
tall guards of the chiefe Peeres; It
was the wise care of their parents
not

nor so haue them obnoxious to the danger of a common miscarriage, or, of those emulations which wait vpon the cloyednesse of an vndiuided conuerstation; but to order their separation so, as one may rescue other from the perill of assault, as one may respect other out of a familiar strangenesse. Had *Ahab* and *Jezebel* beene as wise for their soules, as they were for their seed, both had prospered.

Jeihu is yet but in his first act; If all the sonnes of *Ahab* bleed not, the prophesie is vnansyvered; There shall be no need of his sword, his penne shall worke all this slaughter. He writes a Challenge to *Samaria*, and therein to the guardians of the sons of *Ahab*,
on
daring

daring them, out of the confidence in their defenced City, in their charrets, and horses, in their associats and armes, to set vp the best of their masters sonnes, on his fathers throne, and to fight for his succeffion.

All the Gouvernours of Ababs children conspire in one common feare; no doubt there wanted not in that numerous brood of Kings, some great spirits that if, at least they attained to the notice of this designe, longed for a reuenge, and suggested counsels of resolution to their cowardly guardians; Shall an audacious usurper runnethis away with the Crowne of Israel? Shall the blood of Jezebel be thus traiterously spilt, thus wilfully forgotten? O Israe-
lites,

lites, can ye be so base, as to be ruled by my fathers seruant? Where are the merits of *Ahab*, and *Iehoram*? What is become of the loyall courage of *Israel*? Doubtlesse, ye shal not wāt able seconds to your valour; Do ye thinke the royll and potent alliances of our mother *Iezabel*; and the remayning heires of *Judah*, can draw back their hands from your aide? will they indure to swallow so cruell an indignity? Stir vp your astonished fortitude, ô ye Nobles of *Israel*; redeeme your bleeding honour, reuenge this trecherous conspirator, and establish the right of the vndoubted heires of your Soueraignes; But as warmth clothes to a dead man, so are the motions of valour to a fearefull heart;

heart : Behold two Kings stood not before him, how then shall we stand ?

Feare affrights it selfe rather then it will want bugs of terror : It is true : Two Kings fell before Iehu ; but, two Kings vnaarmed, vnguarded ; Had not the surprizall of Iehu taken aduantage of the vnsuspitious nakednesse of these two Princes , his victory had not beene thus successfull, thus easie. Hafte one of those two Kings, vpon aduertisement and preparation, had abated the fury of that hot Leader. It is the fashion of feare to represent vnto vs alwaies the vworst , in euery euent : not looking at the inequality of the aduantages, but the misery of the successe : as contrarily , it is the guise of faith, and valour, by the
F good

good issue of one enterprise to raise vp the heart to an expectation and assurance of more.

These mens hearts are dead with their Kings, neither dare entertaine the hope of a safe and prosperous resistance, but basely returne, *We are thy seruants, and will doe all that thou shalt bid vs, we will not make any King; doe thou that which is good in thine eyes.*

Well may Iehu think, these men which are thus disloyall to their charge, cannot be faithfull to me; It is their feare that drawes them to this obseruation: Were they not cowards, they would not be traitors to their Princes, subiects to me; I may vse their hands, but I will not trust them: It is a thanklesse obedience that is grounded
booy vpon

vpon feare; there can be no true fidelity without loue, & reuerence. Neyther is it other betwixt God and ys; if out of a dread of hel we be officious, who shall thanke vs for these respects to our selues?

As one that had tasted already the sweetnesse of a resolute expedition, *Iehu* wyrites backe instantly, *If ye be mine, and if ye will harken vnto my voice; take ye the heads of the men your Masters sonnes, and come to me to Iezreel by to morrow this time.* Valiant *Iehu* was so well acquainted with the nature of feare, that he well knew this passion once growne desperate, would be ready to swallow all conditions: so far therefore doth his wisedome improue it, as to make these Peers his executionets, who presently

vpon the receipt of his charge turne
cruell, & by a ioynt consent fetch
off the seauenty heads of those
Princes, whom they vndertooke
to guard, vvhom they had flatte-
red vwith the hopes of greater ho-
nour.

No doubt, but amongst so ma-
ny sonnes of *Ahab*, some had so
demeaned themselues, that they
had wonne zealous professions
of loue from their guardians: Ex-
cept perhaps death stole vpon
them in sleepe, what teares, what
intreaties, what coiurations must
here needs haue beene?

What haue wee done, ô yee
Peeres of *Israel*, that might deserue
this bloody measure? We are the
sonnes of *Ahab*; therefore haue ye
hitherto professed to obserue vs;

what change is this? vvhyl should
that which hath hitherto kept
you loyall, now make you cruell?
Is this the reward of the long
peaceable gouernment of our fa-
ther? are these the Trophees of A-
hab's victories against Benhadad,
Iehoram against Hazael? If wee
may not raigne, yet at least, let vs
liue: Or if vve must dye; why
will your hands bee imbruued in
that blood, vvhich ye had vvont
to terme royall, and sacred? vvhyl
will ye of Tutors tarne murthe-
rers? All pleas are in vaine to them
that are deafned with their ovyn
feares. Perhaps these expostulati-
ons might haue fetched some
dewes of pity from the eyes, and
kisses from the lips of these vn-
faithfull Tutors, but cannot pre-

uent the stroke of death; These Crocodiles vveepe vpon those, vvhom they must kill: & if their owne sonnes had beene in the place of *Ahab*, doubtlesse they had beene sacrificed to the vwill of an usurper, to the parents safety: It is ill relying vpon timorous natures, vpon euery occasion those crazie reeds vwill breake, and runne into our hands. How vworthy were *Ahab* and *Iezabel* of such friends? They had been euer false to God, how should men be true to thē? They had sold themselues to vworke wickednes, and now they are requited with a mercenary fidelity: for a few lines haue these men sold all the heads of *Ahab* posterity: Could euer the policy of *Iezabel* haue reacht so farre, as

to

to suspect the possibility of the extirpation of so ample an issue in one night, by the hands of her trustiest subjects?

Now she that by her letter sent to the Elders of *Iezreel*, shed the blood of *Naboth* and his sonnes, hath the blood of all her sonnes shed by a letter sent from *Iezreel*, to the Elders of *Samaria*. At last, God will be sure to come out of the debt of vvicked sinners, and will pay them with that coyne, which is both most proper, and least lookt for.

Early in the morning, in that gate of *Iezreel*, where *Ahab* had passed many an vnjust sentence, is presented vnto *Iehu*, the fearfull pledge of his soueraignty, seventy gastely heads of the sons of *Ahab*.

Some carnall eye that had seene
so many young and smooth faces
besmeared vwith blood, would
haue melted into compassion, be-
moning their harmlesse age, their
vntimely end: It is not for the iu-
stice of God to stand at the barre
of our corrupted iudgment. Ex-
cept we include some grandchil-
dren of *Ahab* within this number,
none of these dyed before they
vvere seasoned vwith horrible I-
dolatry; or if they had, they were
in the loynes of *Ahab* when hee
sold himselfe to worke wicked-
nesse; & now it is iust vwith God
to punish *Ahab's* vwickedenesse in
this fruit of his loynes. The holy
feuerity of God in the reuenge of
sinne sometimes goes so farre that
our ignorance is ready to mis-
take

take it for cruelty.

The vvonder and horror of those two heapes hath easily drawne together the people of Iezreel : Iehu meets them in that seat of publique iudgment ; and finding much amazednes & passionate confusion in their faces ; he cleares them , and sends them to the true originall of these sudden and astonishing massacres.

Howeuer his owne conspiracy, and the cowardly treachery of the Princes of *Israel* had been (not vwithout their hainous sinne) the visible meanes of this iudgment, yet he directs their eyes to an hyer authoritie ; the iust decree of the Almighty, manifested by his seruant *Elijah* ; vwho euen by the vvilling sinnes of men can most wisely,

wisely, most hostilely fetch about his most righteous and blessed purposes.

If the Peers of Samaria out of a base feare, if Iehu out of an ambition of raigning shed the foule blood of Ababs posterity; the sin is their owne, but in the meane time the act is no other then what the infinite justice of God would justly worke by their mis-inten-
tions. Let these Israellites but looke vp from earth to heauen, these tragicall changes cannot trouble the; thicher Iehu sends them; wiping off the envy of all this blood, by the warrant of the diuine pre-
ordination: In obedience where-
unto he sends after these heires of
Abab, all his kinsfolkes, fauourites,
priests that remained in Iezreel;
and

and now hauing cleared these coasts, he hafts to Samaria: whom should he meet with in the way, but the brethren of Ahaziah King of Iudah; they are going to visit their cozens the sonnes of Ahab: This young troupe was thinking of nothing but iollity, and courtly entertainment, when they meet with death: So suddenly, so secretly had Iehu dispatched these bold executions, that these Princes could imagine no cause of suspition: How could they thinke it might be dangerous to be knowne for the brethren of Ahaziah, or friends to the brethren of Iehoram? The iust prouidence of the Almighty hath brought all this conie under one net. Iehu thinkes it not safe to let god so many auengers

gers of *Ahaziah's* blood; so many
corruall's of his Soueraignty. The
vnhappy affinitie of *Iehosaphat*
with *Ahab* is no lesse guilty of this
slaughter, then *Iebues* ambition;
This match by the inoculation of
one bud, hath tainted all the sap
of the house of *Judah*. The two
& fourtie brethren of *Ahaziah* are
therefore sent after the seuentie
sonnes of *Ahab*, that they may o-
uertake them in death, whom
they came to visit. God will
much lesse brooke Idolatry from
the loines of a *Iehosaphat*: Our in-
tirenesse with wicked men scoffs
us both in their sinnes and judg-
ments; so conuincong flattery
Doubtlesse many *Israelites* that
were devoted to the family and
allies of *Ahab*, lookt (what they
durft)

durst) awry at this common effusion of royal blood; yet in the worst of the depravednes of *Israel*, there were some which both drouped vnder the deplored Idolatry of the times, and congratulated to *Iebu* this feuere vindication of Gods inheritance: Amongst the rest, *Tonadab* the son of *Rechab* was most eminent. That man was by descent deriu'd from *Iethro*; a *Midianite* by nation, but incorporated into *Israel*; a man, whose piety, and strict conuersation did both teach, and shame those twelve Tribes to which he was ioyned; He was the author of an austere rule of ciuility to his posterity; to whom he debarred the vse of wine, cities, possessions: This old and rough friend of *Iebu*, (out of his

his mouing habirations) meets him, and applauds his successe; He that allowed not wine to his seed, allowes the blood of *Ahab's* seed poured out, by the hand of *Iehu*; He that shun'd the city, is caryed in *Iehu's* charet, to the palace of *Samaria*.

How easily might *Iehu* haue beene deceiued? Many a one professes vprightnesse, who yet is all guile: *Ionadab's* cariage hath been such, that his word merits trust: It is a blessing vpon the plaine-hearted, that they can be beleev'd: Honest *Ionadab* is admitted to the honor of *Iehu's* seat; and called (in stead of many) to witnesse the zeale of the new-anointed King of *Israel*.

Whiles *Iehu* had so doe with Kings,

Kings, his cunning and his courage held equal pace together; but now that he is to deale with idolatrous priests, his wile goes alone, and preuailes: He calls the people together, and dissembling his intentions, sayes, *Ahad serued Baal a little, but Iehu shall serue him much: Now therefore call vnto me all the Prophets of Baal, all his seruants, and all his priests, let none be wanting: for I haue a great sacrifice to doe to Baal: whosoeuer shall be wanting, he shall not liue.*

What a dead palenesse was there now in the faces of those few true-harted *Israelites*, that looked for an happy restauration of the religion of God? How could they choose but think; Alas, how are we fallen from our hopes? Is this

this the change we lookt for? was it only ambition that hath set this edge vpon the sword of *Iehu*? It was not the person of *Ahab* that we disliked but the sins : If those must still succeed, what haue we gained? Woe be to vs, if onely the author of our misery be changed, not the condition, not the cause of our misery.

On the other side, what insulations and triumphs sounded euery where of the ioyfull *Baalites*? What glorying of the truth of their profession, because of the successe? what scornes of their deieected opposites? what exprobations of the disappointed hopes, and predictions of their aduerse Prophets? what promises to themselves of a perpetuity of *Baalisme*?

How

How did the dispersed priests of *Baal* now flock together, and applaud each others happiness, and magnifie the deuotions of their new Soueraigne ? Neuer had that Idoll so glorious a day as this for the pompe of his seruice ; Before, he was adored singlyly in corners, now solemne sacrifices shall bee offered to him by all his clients, in the great Temple of the mother Citié of *Israel*. I can commend the zeale of *Iehu*, I cannot commend the fraud of *Iehu* ; We may come to our end euен by crooked wayes : He that bad him to smite for him, did not bid him to lie for him : Falshood, though it be but tentatiue, is neither needed, nor approued by the God of truth : If policy haue allowed offici-

G ous

ous vntruths, Religion neuer.

By this deuice , the house of *Baal* is well furnished, well filled; not one of his *Chemarim* eyther might, or would be absent : not one of those which were present, might be vnrobed : False Gods haue euer affected to imitate the true. Euen *Baal* hath Temples, Altars, Priests , vestments : All religions haue allotted peculiar habits to their hyest deuotions. Those Vestments which they mis-called sacred are brought forth, and put on for the glory of this seruice.

Iehu and *Jonadab* are first carefull that this separation be exact ; they search, and see that no seruant of the Lord be crept into that thrōg: What shoulde a religious *Israelite* doe

doe in the Temple of *Baal*? Were any such there, hee had deserved their smart, who would partake with their worship; but if curioſity ſhould haue drawne any thither, the mercy of *Iebu* ſeekes his rescue: How much more fauourable is the God of mercies in not taking aduantage of our infirmities.

Well might this ſearch haue bred ſuſpition, were it not that in all thoſe Idolatrous ſacrifices, the firſt care was to auoid the profane: Euen *Baal* would admit no mixture, how ſhould the true God abide it?

Nothing wanted now, but the ſacrifice: No doubt whole heards and flockes were ready for a preſtence of ſome royll hecatombs;

G 2 where-

whereof some had now already
smoked on their Altars. O Iehu
what meanes this dilation? If thou
abhorrest *Baal*, why didst thou
giue way to this last sacrifice?
why didst thou not cut off these
Idolaters before this vpshot of
their wickednesse? Was it that
thou mightst be sure of their guil-
tinesse? was it that their number,
together with their sinne, might
be complete? What acclamations
were here to *Baal*, what joy in
the freedome of their reuiued
worship: when all on the sud-
den, those that had sacrificed, are
sacrificed; The Souldiers of *Iehu*
by his appointment rush in with
their swords drawne, and turne
the temple into a slaughter-house.
How is the tune now changed?

What

What shrieking was here? what out-cries? what running from one sword, to the edge of another? what scrambling vp the walls and pillars? what climbing into the windowes? what vaine endeuors to escape that death which would not be shunned? whether running, or kneeling, or prostrate; they must dye. Now, daid no he

The first part of the sacrifice was *Baals*, the latter iſ Gods: The blood of beasts was offered in the one, of men in the other; the shedding of this was so much more acceptable to God, by how much these men were more beasts, then those they sacrificed. Oh happy obedience; God was pleased with a sacrifice from the house of *Baal*; The Idolaters are

slaine, the Idols burnt, the house of *Baal* turn'd to a draught (tho even thus lesse yncleane, lesse noysome, then in the former perfumes;) and in one word, *Baal* is destroyed out of *Israel*.

Who that had seene all this zeale for God, would not haue said, *Iehu* is a true *Israelite*. Yet, he that rooted out *Ahab*, would not be rid of *Tereboam*: He that destroyed *Baal*, maintained the two Calties of *Dan* and *Bethel*. That Idolatry was of a lower ranke, as being a mis-worship of the true God; whereas the other was a worship of the false: Euen the easier of both is haynous, and shall robb *Iehu* of the praise of his yprightnesse.

A false heart may laudably quit

it selfe of some one gross sin, & in
the meane time hugg some lesser
euill that may condemne it : As
a man recouered of a Feuer, may
dye of a Iaundis, or a Dropsie.
We lose the thanke of all, if wee
wilfullly fault in one.

It is an intire goodness that God
cares for : Perhaps (such is the
bounty of our God) a partiall obedi-
ience may be rewarded with
a temporall blessing; (as *Iehues* se-
urity to *Ahab* shal cary the crown
to his seed for foure generations)
but we can neuer haue any com-
fortable assurance of an eternall
retribution, if our hearts & wayes
be not perfitt with God. Woe be
to vs, ô God, if wee bee not all
thine : wee cannot but euerlast-
ingly depart from thee, if wee

G 4 depart

depart not from euery sinne :
Thou haft purged our hearts
from the Baal of our grosse Idola-
tries, oh cleare vs from the golden
Calues of our pety corruptions
also; that thou maist take pleasure
in our vprightnesse; and wee
may reape the sweet com-
forts of thy gracious re-
compensing muneration. To whom
all my habisوارد vies ambiad
of wisdom and innumerable knowledges
and bolygno hafft taught me

ATHALIAH

ATHALIAH and IOASH.

H the wofull ruines
of the house of
good *Iehosaphat* :
Iehu hath slain two
and fourty of his is-
sue ; *Athaliah* hopes to root out
the rest : This daughter of *Ahab*
was not like to be other then fa-
tal to that holy Line ; One drop
of that wicked blood was e-
nough both to impure, and spill
all the rest which affinity had
mixed with it.

It is not vnlike that *Ahaziah* be-
taking himselfe to the society of
Iehorams

1 Kings 11,
& 12.
And
2 Chron.
23. & 24.

Iehoramis warres, committed the sway of his Scepter to his mother *Athaliah*. The daughter of *Iezebel* cannot but be plotting: when she heares of the death of *Ahaziah*, and his brethren, inflicted by the heavy hand of *Iehu*, shew straight casts for the Kingdome of *Judah*: The true heires are infants, their minority giues her both colour of rule, and oportunity of an easie extirpation. Perhaps, her ambition was not more guilty then her zeale of *Baalisme*: she saw *Iehu* out of a detestation of Idolatry, trampling on the blood of *Iehoram*, *Iezebel*, *Ahaziah*, the sonnes of *Ahab*, the brethren of *Ahaziah*, the priests and prophets of *Baal*; and in one word, triumphing in the destruction both of *Ahab*, and his Gods out

out of *Israel*: and now she thinks,
Why should not I destroy *Iehosaphat*,
and his God out of *Judah*?

Who ever saw an Idolater that
was not cruell? *Athaliah* must
needs let out some of her owne
blood, out of the throat of *Aba-*
ziah's sonnes; yet she spares not
to shed it out of a thirst of soue-
raignty. O God how worthy of
wonder are thy iust and mercifull
dispensations! In that thou suffer-
est the seed of good *Iehosaphat* to
bee destroyed by her hand; in
whose affinity he offended; and
yet sauest one branch of this stock
of *Iehosaphat*; for the sake of so
faithfull a progenitor. *b*be*Wicked Athaliah*, couldst thou
thinke, God would so farre for-
get his Seruant *David* (though no
other**

other of those loynes had secon-
ded his vertues) as to suffer all his
seed to be rooted out of the earth?
This vengeance was for thy fa-
ther *Ahab*; The man according
to Gods owne heart shall haue a
lineall heyre to succeed in his
Throne, when thou and thy fa-
thers house shall haue vanished
into forgetfulness. *Q. r. m. p. i. l. l.*
For this purpose hath the wise
providence of God ordained a *Ie-
bosheba*, and matcht her in the
priestly Tribe : Such reuerence
did *Iehoram*, King of *Iudah* (though
degenerated into the Idolatry of
his father in law *Ahab*) beare to
this sacred function, that he mar-
ries his daughter to *Iehoiada* the
Priest. Euen Princesses did not
then scorne the bed of those that
serued

serued at Gods Altar: Why shoulde
the Gospel poure contempt vpon
that which the Law honoured?

That good Lady had too much
of *Iehosaphat* in her, to suffer the
vtter extirpation of that royall
seed; She could not doubtlesse,
without the extreme danger of
her owne life, saue the life of her
nephew *Joash*; With what a lo-
uing boldnesse doth she aduen-
ture to steale him from amongst
those bleeding carkasses, in the
chamber of death? Her match
gaue her oportunity to effect that,
which both nature, and religion
moued her to attempt: neyther
know I, whether more to won-
der at the cunning of the deuice,
or the courage of the enterprise, or
the secrecie of the concealment, or
the

the happiness of the successse : Certainly, *Athaliah* was too cruelly-carefull to forget this so late borne sonne of *Abaziah*; of all the rest, his age would not suffer him to be out of her eye : In all likelihood therefore, shee must needs haue missed so noted a corps, had there not beene a substitution of some other dead chyld in his roome : In that age, the fauour is not so distinguisable ; especially of a dead face. Without some pious deceit this worke could never haue beene effected ; Else, had the chyld beene secretly subduced, and missed by his bloody grandmother, her perpetuall iealousie had both expected a suruiuing heytte, and continued a curious, and yntoydable search : both
which

which were now shunned at once, whilst *Athaliah* reckons him for dead, whom *Iehosheba* hath preserued. Mischief sometimes failes of thosē appointments, wherein it thinkes to haue made the surest worke; God laughes in heauen at the plots of Tyrans, and befooles them in their deepest projects. He had said to *David*, *Of the fruit of thy body will I set vpon thy seate*; In vaine shall earth and hell conspire to frustrate it.

Sixe yeares hath *Ioash*, and his nurse beene hid in a close cell of the Temple: Those roomes were destin'd onely to the holy Tribe; yet now reioyce to harbour such a guest; The rigour of the ordinary Law must yeeld to cases of so important necessity.

All

All this could not possibly be done and continued without the priuity of many faithfull Priests & Leuites; who were as carefull to keepe this counsell, as hopefull of the issue of it: It is not hard for many honest hearts to agree in a religious secrerie; Needs must those lips bee shut, which God hath sealed vp.

Judah had not been vsed to such a yoke; long had it groned vnder the tyranny not of a woman onely, but an Idolatrous *Sydonian*: If any of that sexe might haue claimed that Scepter, none had so much right to it, as *Iehosheba* her selfe; But good *Iehoiada* the Priest, who had rather to bee a loyall guardian to the King, then an husband to a Queene, now findes

time

time to set on foot the iust title of
Joash; and to put him into the mis-
vnsurped throne of his father Aha-
ziah.

In the seventh yeare, therefore,
he sends for the Captaines, and
the Gard; and hauing sworne
them secrecy, by vndoubted wit-
nesses makes faith vnto them of
the truth of their natvie Prince,
thus happily rescued from the
bloody knife of his mercilesse
Grandmother, marshals the great
businesse of his Inauguration;
giues every one his charge; sets
euery one his station; and so di-
poses of his holy forces, as was
most needfull for the safety of the
King, the reuenge of the Vsurper,
the preuention of tumults, the
establishment of the Crowne

101

H

vpon

upon the owners head in Peace
and Joy.

There was none of all these agents who did not hold the businesse to bee his owne ; Every true subiect of Judah was feelingly interessed in this seruice ; neither was there any of them, who was not secretly heart-burned all this while, with the hatefull government of this Idolatrous Tyrantiesse : And now this inward fire is glad to find a vent ; How gladly do they address themselues to this welcome imployment ? The greatest part of this secret band were Levites, who might therefore both meet together with least suspition, and be more securely trusted by Iehoiada, vnder whom they served ; Euen that noy

holy Priest of God in stead of teaching the Law, sets the gard ; orders the Captaines , ranges the troupes of Iudah ; and in stead of a Censer, brings forth the Speares and Shields of *Dauia* ; the Temple is for the present, a Field, or an Artillery-yard ; and the Ephods are turned into harnesse. That house, in the rearing whereof not the noyse of an hammer might be heard, now admits of the clashing of armour ; and the secret murmurs of some military atchieuement : No circumstan-
ces either of place, or calling, are so punctuall, as that publique ne-
cessity may not dispense with their alteration.

All things are now ready for this solemnity : Each man rejoyn-

ces to fixe vpon his owne foot-
ing ; and longs to see the face of
their long-concealed Soueraigne ;
and vowes his blood to the vin-
dication of the common liberty,
to the punishment of a cruell in-
truder : Now *Iehoiada* brings
forth vnto them the Kings Son,
and presents him to the Peeres,
and people ; Hardly can the mul-
titude containe it selfe from shou-
ting out too soone : One sees in
his countenance the features of
his Father, *Ahaziah* ; another of
his Grandfather, *Iehoram* ; a third
professes to discerne in him some
lines , and fashion of his great-
grandfather *Iehosaphat* ; all find in
his face the naturall impressions
of Maiesty ; and reade in it the
hopes, yea the prophesies of their
future

future happiness. Not with more ioy, then speed, doth Jeboiada accomplish all the rites of the Coronation. Before that young King could know what was done to him, hee is anointed, crowned, presented with the booke of the Law: Those ceremonies were instructiue; and, no doubt, Jeboiada failed not to commit vpon them in due time, to that royall Pupill.

The Oyle, wherewith he was anointed, signified his designation to that high seruice; and those endowments from heauen that might enable him to so greate a function.

The Crowne, wherewith he was adorned, signified that glorie and maiesty which should

both incourage, and attend his
Princeley cares.

The booke of the Testimony
signified the diuine rules and di-
rections, whereto he must frame
his heart and actions, in the weil-
ding of that Crowne, in the im-
prouement of that oile.

These three, the oile, the Crown
the Testimonie, that is, inward
powers, outward magnificence,
true pietie and iustice make vp a
perfect Prince. None of these may
be wanting. If there be not a due
calling of God, and abilities meet
for that greatnessse, the oile faileth:
If there be not a Maiesticke grace
and royltie, that may command
reuerence, the Crowne is missing;
If there be not a carefull respect to
the law of God, as the absolute
guide

guide of all counsells, and determinations, the Testimonie is neglected; all of them concurring, make both King and people happy.

Now, it is time for the people to clap their hands, and by their lowd acclamations to witnessse their joy, which must needs break forth with so much more force, by how much it was longer, vpon feares and policy, suppressed.

The Court and the Temple were neere together; However it was with Athaliah, and the late reuolted Prifieses of Iudah, according to the common word, the neerer to the Church, the further from God; their religious predecessors held it the greatest commodity of their house, that it neighboured

upon the house of God; From her palace might Athaliah easily heare the joyfull shouts of the multitude, the lowyd noise of the Trumpets; and as astonished with this new tumult of publike gratulations, she comes running into the Temple: Neuer had her foot træd vpon that holy paument, till nowv that she came to fetch a iust revenge from that God whose worship shee had contempned,

It fell out well, that her sudden amazdaesse called her forth, without the attendance of any strong guard, whose side-taking might haue made that quarell mutually bloody: Shee soone heares, and sees what shee likes not; her eare meets with, God
faue

sauē the King; her eye meets with the whlooked for heyre of the Kingdome, sitting on his throne, crownned, and robed, in the royall fashion; guarded with the Cap-taines and souldiers, proclaimed by the Trumpeters, acclaimed & applauded by the people.

Who can say whether this sight draue her more neer to frenzie, or death? How could it bee otherwise, when those great spirits of hers, that had beepe long vsed to an vncontrolled soueraigntie, find themselues so unexpectedly suppressed.

Shee now rends her cloathes, and cryes, Treason, treason, as if that voice of hers could still command all hearts, all hands; as if one breath of hers were powerfull

full enough to blow away all these new desaignes : Oh Athaliah, to whom dost thou complaine thy selfe ? they are thy iust executioners wherewith thou art encompassed ; If it be treason to set vp the true heire of Abaziah, thou appealest to thy Traitors. The treason was thine, theirs is iustice ; The time is now come of thy reckoning for all the royall blood of Judah, which thine ambition shed ; wonder rather at the patience of this long forbearance, then the rigor of this execution.

There needs no formall seat of iustice in so apparent offence, Iehoiada passes the sentence of death vpon her ; Haue her forth of the ranges ; Let her not be slaine in the house of the Lord ; and him that followeth

loweth her, kill with the sword.

Had not this usurpation beeene palpable, Jeboiada would not haue presumed to intermedle; Now being both the Priest of God, and Vnckle and Protector to the lawfull King, he doth that, out of the necessity of the state, which his infant Soueraigne (if hee could haue beeene capable of those thoughts) would haue desired.

Violent hands are layd vpon Athaliah, whom no doubt a prond and furious disdaine off so quicke a charge, and of so bough an age made miserably impatient. Now she frownes, and talts, and shrikks, and commands, and threatens, and reuiles, and intreats in vaine, and dyes with as much ill will from her selfe, as she liued with the

the ill will of her repining subjects.

I see not any one man of all her late flatterers, that followes her, either for pitty, or rescue; Euery man willingly giues her vp to iustice; Not one sword is drawn in her defence; Not one eye laments her. Such is the issue of a tyrannicall mis-gouernment; that which is obeyed not without secrethate, is lost not without publick joy.

How like is Athaliah to her mother Jezebel, as in conditions and carriage, so euen in death: Both killed violently, both killed vnder their owne walls; both slaine with Treason in their mouthes; both slaine in the entrance of a changed gouernment:

One

One trod on by the horses, the other flaine in the horſe-gate.
Both paid their owne blood for
the innocent blood of others.

How suddenly, how easily is Iudah restored to it ſelfe, after ſo long, and ſo fearfull a deprauati-
on; The people ſcarce beleue
their owne eyes, for the wonder
of this happy change; neither
know I whether they bee more
ioyed in the ſight of their new
King, thus ſtrangely preſerued, or
in the ſight of *Iehoiada*, that had
preſerued him.

No man can enuy the pro-
tection of the young King vnto
him, by whose meanes hee liues
and raignes: That holy man cares
only to improue his authority, to
the common good: *He makes a*

come-

covenant betweene the Lord, and the King, and the people: and after so long & dangerous a disjunction, reunites them to each other. Their reuived zeale bestirs it selfe, and breakes downe the Temples, and altars, and images of *Baal*, and sacrifices his idolatrous Priest; Shortly, both *Ahab*, and *Baal* is destroyed out of Iudah.

The Scepter of Iudah is changed from a woman, to a child; but, a Child trained vp, and tutored by *Iehoiada*; This minority so guided was not inferiour to the mature age of many predecessors. Happy is that land, the non-age of whose Princes falls into holy and iust hands. Yet etien these holy and iust hands came short of what they might haue done; The high

high places remained still : Those altars were erected to the true God, but in a wrong place : It is manuell if there be not some blemishes found in the best gouernment : I doubt *Iehoiada* shall once aby it deare that hee did not his vtmost.

But for the mayne, all was wel with Iudah, in all the dayes of *Iehoiada* ; euen after that *Joash* was growne past his pupillage : Hee that was the Tutor to his infancie, was the councellor of his ripe age ; and was equally happy in both : How pleasing was it to that good High Priest, to be commanded by that charge of his in the busynesse of God ? The yong King giues order to the Priests, for the collection of large summs,

to

to the repaying of the breaches of Gods House. It becomes him well to take care of that, which was the nursery of his infancy : And now, after three and twentie yeares he expostulates with his late Guardian , *Iehoiada*, and the rest of his coate, *Why repayre ye not the breaches ?*

Oh gracious and happy vicissitude ; *Iehoiada* the Priest had ruled the infancy of King *Ioash* in matters of state ; and now *Ioash* the King commands aged *Iehoiada* the Priest in matter of devotion. In the affaires of God , the action is the Priests, the ouersight and coaction is the Princes : By the carefull indetior of both, Gods house is repayred, his seruice flourishest.

D3

But

But alas, that it may too well
appeare, that the ground of this
motion was not altogether in-
ward, no sooner doth the life of
Iehoiada cease, then the deuotion
of *Joash* begins to languish : and
after some languor, dyes.

The benefit of a truly religious
Prelate, or States-man, is not
knowne till his losse.

Now some idolatrous Peeres
of Iudah haue soone mis-carried
the King from the House of the
Lord God of their Fathers, to
serue Groues, and Idols. Yea,
whither goe we wretched men,
if we be left by our Maker? King
Joash is turned, not idolater onely,
but persecutor ; yea, (which is yet
more horrible to consider) perse-
cutor of the sonne of that *Iehoiada*

I to

to whom he owes his owne life. *Zechariah* his Cosen german, his foster-brother, the holy issue of those parents, by whom *Ioash* liues, and raignes, for the conſcio-nable rebuke of the idolatry of Prince, and people, is vniuſtly, and cruelly murthered by that vnhankfull hand : How poſſible is it for faire and Saint-like beginnings to ſliut vp in monſtrous impieties ? Let him that thinkes hee stands, take heed leſt he fall. When did God euer put vp ſo foule ingratitude to himſelfe, to his ſeruants ? O *Ioash*, what eye can pity the fearfull deſtruſion of thee, and thy Iudah ? If ye haue forgotten the kind-nesſe of *Iehoiada*, your vnkindnesſ to *Iehoiada* ſhall not be forgotten :

A small army of Syrians came vp against Iudah and Ierusalem, and destroyed all the Princes of the people, and sent all the spoyle of them to Damascus. Now Hazael reuenges this quartell of God, and his anointed; and plagues that people which made themselues unworthy to bee the Lords inheritance.

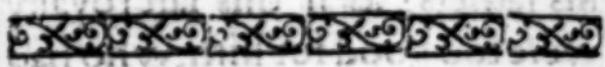
And what becomes of Joash? Hee is left in great diseases, when his owne seruants conspired against him for the blood of the sonnes of Iehoiada, and slew him on his bed, and he dyed; and they buried him not in the Sepulcher of the Kings. Dying Zechariah had sayd in the bitternesse of his departing soule, The Lord looke vpon it, and require it: I confesse I had rather to haue

I z heard

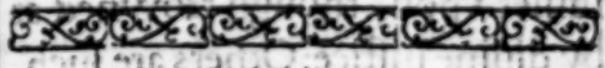
heard him say, *The Lord passe it ouer, and remit it;* so said Steuen; such difference there is betwene a Martyr of the Law, and of the Gospell: although I will hope the zeale of iustice, not the vncharitable heare of reuenge drew forth this word: God heares it, and now giues an account of his notice; Thus doth the Lord require the blood of *Iehoiadaes* son; euен by the like vnthankfull hand of the obliged seruants of *Joash*. He that was guilty of abominable Idolatry, yet (as if God meant to waue that chal-lenge) is called to reckoning for his cruell vnthankfulness to *Iehoiada*; This crime shall make him odious aliue, and shall abandon him dead from the sepulcher of his

his fathers; as if this last royalty were too good for him, who had forgotten the law of humanity. Some vices are such, as Nature smiles vpon, though frowned at by diuine Iustice: Others are such, as euен Nature it selfe abhorres; such is this of Ingratitude, which therefore caries so much more detestation from God, as it is more odious euен to them that haue blotted out the image of God.

I 3 IOASH



JOASH WITH ELISHA DYING.



2 Kings 13.



The two Kingdoms of *Judah* and *Israel*, how euer diuided both in government, and affection, yet loued to interchange the names of their Kings; Euen *Israel* also had their *Joash*, no better then that of *Judah*; he was not more the father of a later *Ieroboam*, then (in respect of misworship) he was the son of the first *Ieroboam*, who made *Israel* to sin; Those Calues of *Dan* and *Bethel*, out of a polick misdeuotion, besotted all the

the succession of the ten vsurped Tribes : yet euен this Idolatrous King of *Israel* comes downe to visit the sicke bed of *Elisha*, and weeps vpon his face.

That holy Prophet was never any flatterer of Princes , neyther spared he iuictuies against their most plausible sinnes : yet King *Ioash*, that was beaten by his reprooves , washes that face with the teares of loue, and sorrow, which had often frowned vpon his wickednesse.

How much difference there was betwixt the *Ioash* of *Israel*, and the *Ioash* of *Iudah*? That of *Iudah* hauing beene preserued and nurtured by *Iehoiada* the Priest, af-
ter all professiōns of dearnesse
shuts vp in the vnkinde murther

of his sonne ; and that meerly for the iust reproofe of his own Idolatry : This of *Israel* hauing beene estranged from the Prophet *Elijah*, and sharply rebuked for the like offence, makes loue to his dying reprouer , and bedewes his pale face with his teares : Both were bad enough, but this of *Israel* was, howeuer vicious , yet good-natur'd : That of *Iudah* added to his wickednesse, an ill disposition, a dogged humor. There are varieties eu'en of euill men ; some are worse at the root, others at the branch ; some more ciuilly harmlesse, others fouler in morality. According to the exercise of the restraining grace, naturall men doe eyther rise, or fall in their ill.

The longest day must haue his
euening:

euening: Good *Elisha*, that had liued some ninety yeares, a wonder of Prophets, and had ouerworne many successions in the thrones of *Israel*, & *Iudah*, is now cast vpon the bed of his sicknesse, yea, of his death: That very age might seeme a disease; which yet is seconded with a languishing distemper: It is not in the power of any holinesse to priuiledge vs from infirmity of body, from finall dissolution: He that stretched himselfe vpon his bed, ouer the dead carkasse of the *Shunamites* sonne, and reviuied it, must now stretch out his owne limmes vpon his sicke bed, and dye: Hee saw his Master *Elijah* rapt vp suddenly from the earth, and fetcht by a fiery chariot from this vale
of

of mortallitie; himselfe must lea-
surely wait for his last pangs, in a
lingring passage to the same glo-
ry. There is not one way appoin-
ted to vs, by the diuine prouide-
nace, vnto one common blef-
sednesse: One hath more paine,
another hath more speed: Vio-
lence snatcheth away one, ano-
ther by an insensible pace drawes
euery day neerer to his terme:
The wisedome and goodnesse of
God magnifies it selfe in both:
Happy is he that after due prepa-
ration, is past through the gates of
death, ere he be aware; Happy is
he that by the holy vse of long
sicknesse is taught to see the gates
of death afarre off, and addredded
for a resolute passage: The one
dyes like *Elijah*, the other like
Elisha,

Elisha, both blessedly.

The time was, when a great King sent to *Elisha* to know if he should recover; now the King of *Israel*, as knowing that *Elisha* shall not recover (so had his consumption spent him) comes to visit the dying Prophet; & when his teares would giue him leaue; breakes forth into a passionate exclamation, *O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the barssmen thereof.* Yet the Calues of *Dan* and *Bethel* haue left some goodness in *Ioash*: As the best man hath something in him worthy of reproofe; so the faultieſt hath ſomething commendable. Had not the ſpirit of God himſelfe told vs, that *Ioash* did that which was enill in the ſight of the Lord, wee had admired
griuid

admired this piety, this reverent respect to the Prophet. The holiest man could not haue said more: It is possible for the clients of a false worship, to honor (out of another regard) the professors of Truth; From the hand of Eli-sha had Iehu the grandfather of Iash*b* receiued his vncion to the Kingdome: this fauour might not be forgotten.

Visitation of the sicke is a duty required both by the law of humanity, and of religion; Bodily infirmitie is sad, and comfortlesse; and therefore needs the presence, and counsell of friends to relieue it; Although, when wee draw the curtaines of those that are eminently gracious, wee doe rather fetch (with Iash*b*) then bring

bring a blessing.

How sensible should wee bee
of the losse of holy men, when a
Ioash spends his teares vpon *Eli-
sha*? If we be more affected with
the forgoing of a naturall friend,
or kinsman, then of a noted and
vsefull Prophet , it argues more
loue to our selues , then to the
Church of God, then to G O D
himselfe.

What vse there was of charcts
and horsemen in those waires of
the Ancient, all Histories can tell
vs : All the strength of the battell
stood in these : There could bee
neither defence, nor offence, but
by them : such was *Elisha vnto Is-
rael* ; The greatest safegard to any
nation is the sanctity, and faith-
fulness of their Prophets ; with-
out

out which, the Church and State
lyes open to vtter desolation.

The same words that *Elisha*
said of his master *Elijah*, when he
saw him taken vp from the earth,
doth *Joash* now speake of *Elisha*,
neere his dissolution : *O my father,*
my father, the charets of Israel, and the
horsemen thereof. The words were
good ; the teares were pious ; but
where are the actions ? *O Joash,* if
the Prophet were thy father, wher
was thy filiall obedience ? he cry'd
downe thy Calues, thou vpheldst
them ; he counsell'd thee to good,
thou didst euill in the sight of the
Lord.

If the Prophet were the cha
rets and horsemen of *Israel*, why
didst thou fight against his holy
doctrine ? If thou wepest for his
losse,

losse, why didst thou not weepe
for those sinnes of thine, that pro-
cured it ?

Had thine hand answered thy
tongue, *Israel* had beene happy in
Elisha; *Elisha* had beeene happy in
Israel, and thee; Words are no
good tryall of profession: The
worst men may speake well:
Actions haue onely the power to
descry hypocrites.

Yet euuen a *Ioash* thus complying,
shall not goe away vnbleſſed:
This outward kindnesſe ſhall re-
ceiuē an outward retribution;
These few drops of warme wa-
ter ſhed vpon the face of a Pro-
phet, ſhall not loſe their reward;
The ſpirit of propheſie forſakes
not the death-bed of *Elisha*; Hee
calls for bow, and arrowes, and
puts

puts them into the hand of *Ioash*, and putting his hands vpon the Kings hand, hee bids to shoo Eastward: and whiles the shaft flyes, and lights, he sayes, *The arrow of the Lords deliverance from Syria; for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou haue consumed them:* If the weake and withered hand of the Prophet had not beene vpon the youthfull, and vigorous hand of the King, this bow had been drawn in vaine, the strength was from the hand of the King, the blessing from the hand of the Prophet: He whose reall patable hath made the earth to be *Syria*, the arrow, reuenge, the archer, *Ioash*, hath obtained for his last boone from God to *Israel*, that this archer shall shoo this arrow

of

of reuenge, into the heart of Syria, and wound it to death. When the hand of the King, and of the Prophet drawes together, there cannot choose but successse must follow.

How readily doth *Elisha* now make good the words of *Ioash*? How truly is he the Charets, and Horsemen of *Israel*? *Israel* had not fought without him, much lesse had been victorious. If theirs be the indeuour, the successse is his: Euen the dying Prophet puts life, and speed into the Forces of *Israel*, and whiles hee is digging his owne graue, is raisynge Trophes to Gods people.

Hee had received kindnesse from the *Syrians*; amongst them was hee harbour'd in the dearth;

K and

and from some of their Nobles, was presented with rich gifts ; but their enmity to *Israel* drowns all his priuate respects ; he cannot but professe hostility to the publique enemies of the Church : Neither can he content himselfe with a single prediction of their ruine. *Hee bids Joash* to take the arrowes, and smite vpon the ground ; hee sets no number of those strokes ; as supposing the frequēce of those blowes, vwhich *Joash* might well(vpon his former parabolicall act) vnderstand to bee significant. The slacke hand of the King smites but thrise. So apt we are to be wanting to our felues ; so coldly doe wee execute the commands of God : The sick Prophet is not more grecued, then

then angry at this dull negligence; Doubtlesse God had reuealed to him (for his last gratification) that vpon his feruent prayers , so oft as *Ioash* should voluntarily (after his generall charge) smite the earth, so oft should *Israel* smite *Syria*. *Elishaes* zeale doth not languish with his body : with a fatherly authoritie hee chides him, who had styled him father ; not fearing to spend some of his last winde in a myld reproofe, *Thou shouldest haue smitten five or six times, then thou hadst smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it, whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrise.* Not that the vnchangeable decree of the Almighty meant to suspend it selfe vpon the vncertaine issue of *Ioashes* will ; but, hee that put this

word into the mouth of his Prophet, puts this motion into the hand of the King, which did not more willingly stay, then necessarily obey that prouidence wherby it was stirred. Euen whiles wee haue our freest choyce, wee fall vpon those actions and circumstances, whereby the iust and holy will of our God is brought about. Our very neglects, our ignorances shall fulfill his eternall councells.

Elisha dyes, and is buried; his miracles doe not cease with his life: Who can maruell that his liuing prayers raised the sonne of the *Shunamite*, when his dead bones raise the carkasse that touched them. God will bee free in his works; he that must dye himself,

selfe, yet shall reviue another; the same power might haue continued life to him, that gaue it by his bones. *Israel* shall well see that he liues, by whose vertue, *Elisha* was both in life, and death, miraculous: Whiles the Prophet was aliue, the impetration might seeme to be his, though the power were Gods; now that he is dead, the bones can challenge nothing, but send the wondring *Israelites* to that almighty Agent, to whom it is all one to worke by the quicke, or dead. Were not the men of *Israel* more dead then the carkasse thus buried, how could they choose but see in this ruined corps, an embleme of their owne cōdition? how could they choose but thinke, If wee adhere to the

God of *Elisha*, he shall raise our decayed estates, and restore our nation to the former glory.

The *Sadduces* had as yet no being in *Israel*, with what face could that heresie euer after looke into the world, when before the birth of it, it was so palpably conuinced, with an example of the resurrection? Intermission of time, and degrees of corruption adde nothing to the impossibilitie of our rising: The body that is once cold in death, hath no more aptitude to a reanimation, then that which is moldred into dust; Only the diuine power of the Maker must restore eyther, can restore both: When wee are dead, and buryed in the graue of our sinne; it is only the touch of Gods Prophets

phets, applying vnto vs the death
and resurrection of the Sonne of
God , that can put new life into
vs; No lesse true, though spirituall,
is the miracle of our raising vp
from an estate of inward corrup-
tion, to a life of grace.

Yet all this preuailes not with
Israel : No bones of *Elisha* could
raise them from their wicked I-
dolatry : and, notwithstanding
their grosse sins, *Ioash* their King
prospers: Whether it were for the
sake of *Iehu*, whose grand-chyld
he was ; or for the sake of *Elisha*,
whose face hee wept vpon, his
hand is notably successfull : not
onely against the son of *Hazaell*,
King of *Syria*, whom hee beates
out of the Cities of *Israel*; but, a-
gainst *Amaziah* King of *Iudah*,

whom he tooke Prisoner, beating downe the very walls of *Jerusalem*, and returning laden with the sacred, and rich spoyle both of the Temple, and Court, to his *Samaria*.

Oh the depth of the diuine Iustice, and wisedome in these outward administrations ! The best cause, the best man doth not euer fare best : *Amaziah* did that which was right in the sight of the Lord; *Ioash*, euill : *Amaziah* followes *David* (though not with equall paces) *Ioash* followes *Ieroboam*, yet is *Amaziah* shamefully foyled by *Ioash*; Whether God yet meant to visit vpon this King of *Iudah*, the still-odious vnthankfulness of his father to *Iehoiada*; or, to plague *Iudah* for their share in the blood

of

of Zechariah, and their late reuolt to Idolatry ; or, whether Amaziah too much confidence in his own strength (which moued his bold challenge to Joash) were thought fit to be thus taken downe, or what euer other secret ground of Gods iudgment there might be, it is not for our presumption to inquire: Who so by the euent shall iudge of loue, or hatred, shall be sure to run vpon that woe, which belongs to them that call good euill, and euill good.

What a sauage peece of Iustice it is to put the right, whether of inheritance, or honor, to the decision of the sword, when it is no newes for the better to mis-cary by the hand of the worse ?

The race is not to the swift; the
battell

battell is not to the strong; no, not to the good: Perhaps, God will correct his owne by a foyle; perhaps he will plague his enemy by a victory. They are only our spirituall combats wherein our faithfull courage is sure of a crowne.

VZZIAH

V z z i a h L e p r o u s .

Ven the Throne of
Dauid passed ma-
ny chāges of good,
and euill : Good
Iehosaphat was fol-
lowed with three successions of
wicked Princes ; and those three,
were again succeeded with three
others godly, and vertuous ; *A-*
maziah for a long time shone fair,
but at the last, shut vp in a cloud ;
The gods of the *Edomites* marred
him ; his rebellion against God,
stirr'd vp his peoples rebellion a-
gainst him : The same hands that
slew

2 Chro. 26
And
2 King. 15.

slew him, crowned his sonne *Vz-ziah*; so as the yong King might imagine it was not their spight, that drew violence vpō his father, but his owne wickednesse; Both early did this Prince raigne, and late; he began at sixteene; and sat fifty two yeares in the Throne of *Indah*: They that mutined in the declining age of *Amaziah*, the father; are obsequious to the childhood of the sonne, as if they professed to adore souerainty,whiles they hated lewdnesse: The vng-
changed gouernment of good Princes is the happinesse, no lesse
of the subiects then of themselues:
The hand knowes best to guide
those reines to which it hath
beene inured; and euen meane
hackneyes goe on cheerfully in
their

their wonted rode; Custome,
as it makes euils more supporta-
ble, so where it meets with con-
stant mindes, makes good things
more pleasing and beneficiale.

The wise and holy Prophet
Zechariah, was an happy Tutor
to the minority of King *Vzziah* ;
That vessell can hardly mis-cary
where a skilfull sterel-man sits at
the helme : The first praise of a
good Prince is to be iudicious, &
iust, and pious, in himselfe ; the
next is, to giue eare, and way, to
them that are such : Whiles *Ze-
chariah* hath the visions of God,
and *Vzziah* takes the counsels of
Zechariah, it is hard to say whe-
ther the Prophet, or the King, or
the State be happier.

God will be in no mans debt,
so

{ Vziah,
Azariah.

so long as *Vzziah* sought the Lord, God made him to prosper. Even what we doe out of duty cannot want a reward : Godlineſſe neuer disappointed any mans hopes, oft hath exceeded them. If *Vzziah* fight against the *Philistims*, If against the *Arabians*, and *Mehunims*; according to his names, the strength, the help of the Almighty is with him : The *Ammonites* come in with presents, and all the neighbour nations ring of the greatnessse, of the happinessse of *Vzziah*; His bounty and care makes *Ierusalem* both strong, and proud of her new Towers ; yea the very Desert must tast of his munificence.

The outward magnificence of Princes cannot stand firme, vnlesſe

lesse it be built vpon the foundations of prouidence and frugality; *Vzziah* had not beene so great a King, if he had not been so great an husband; he had his flockes in the deserts, and his heards in the plaines; his plowes in the fields, his vine-dressers vpon the mountaines, and in *Carmel*: neither was this more out of profit, then delight, *for he loued husbandry*. Who can contemne those callings for meanness, which haue beene the pleasures of Princes?

Hence was *Vzziah* so potent at home, so dreadfull to his neighbours; his warres had better sinnewes then theirs; which of his predecessors was able to maintaine so settled an army, of more then of three hundred and tenne thou-

thousand trained souldiers, well furnished, well fitted for the suddest occasion? Thrift is the strongest prop of power.

The greatnessse of Vzziah, and the rare deuices of his artificiall Engines for war, haue not more raised his fame, then his heart: so is hee swolne vp with the admiration of his owne strength, and glory, that he breaks againe; How easie it is for the best man to dote vpon himselfe; and to bee lifted vp so high, as to lose the sight both of the ground, whence he rises, and of the hand that aduanced him: How hard it is for him that hath inuented strange engines for the battering of his enemies, to find out any meanes to beat downe his owne proud thoughts?

thoughts? Wise Salomon knew what he did, when hee prayed to bee deliuiered from too much: *Lest, said he, I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?* Vpon this Rocke did the sonne of Salomon run, and split himselfe; His full sayles of prosperity caryed him into presumption & ruine: what may he not now doe? what may he not be? Because hee found his power otherwiche vnlimited; ouer-ruling in the Court, the Cities, the Fields, the Deserts, the Armies, and Magazins, therefore he thinkes hee may doe so in the Temple too: as things royall, ciuill, husbandly, military passed his hands, so why should not (thinkes hee) sacred also? It is a dangerous indiscretion for a man

L

not

not to know the bounds of his
owne calling : What confusion
doth not follow vpon this break-
ing of rankes ?

Vpon a solemne day, King *Uz-
ziah* clothes himselfe in Pontifical
robes, and in the view of that po-
pulous assembly, walkes vp in
state, into the Temple of God,
and boldly approaching to the Altar
of Incense , offers to burne
sweet odours vpon it, to the God
of heauen : *Azariah* the Priest is
sensible of so perillous an incroch-
ment ; he therefore attended with
four score valiant assistants, of that
holy Tribe, hastēs after the King,
and finding him with the censer
in his hand, readie addressed to
that sinfull deuotion, stayes him
with a free, and graue expostula-
tion :

tion : There is no place wherein I could be sory to see thee, o King, but this , where thou art ; neither is there any act , that wee should grudge thee so much , as this , which is the most sacred ; Is it possible that so great an ouer-sight should fall into such wise-dome ? Can a religious Prince , trained vp vnder an holy Zechariah , after so many yeares zealous profession of piety , be either ignorant , or regardlesse of those limits , which God hath set to his owne seruices ?

Oh, what meanes this vncouth attempt ? Consider, o deare Soueraigne , for Gods sake , for thy soules sake , consider , where thou art , what thou doest . it is Gods house wherein thou standest , not

L 2 thine

thine owne; Looke about thee,
and see whether these vailes, these
Tables, these Pillars, these Walls,
these Pauements haue any resem-
blance of earth: There is no place
in all the world whence thy God
hath excluded thee, but only this;
this he hath reserved for his own
use: And canst thou think much
to allow one roome as proper to
him, who hath not grudged all
the rest to thee? But if it bee thy
zeale of a personall seruice to God,
that hath caried thee hither; alas,
how canst thou hope to please
the Almighty with a forbidden
sacrifice? Which of thine holy
Progenitors euer dared to tread,
where thy foot now standeth?
which of them euer put forth their
hand to touch this sacred Altar?

Thou

Thou knowest that God hath set apart, and sanctified his owne attendants ; wherefore serues the Priesthood, if this be the right of Kings ? Were it not for the strict prohibition of our God, it could seeme no other then an honour to our profession, that a King shoule thinke to dignifie himselfe by our employmēt ; but now , knowing the ſeuere charge of the great King of heauen, wee cannot but tremble to ſee that cifer in thine hand ; who euer, out of the holy Tribe, hath weil-ded it vntreuenged ? This affront is not to vs, it is to the God whō we ſerue ; In awe of that terrible Maieſty, as thou wouldest auoid ſome exemplary iudgement, O King, withdraw thy ſelfe, not

without humble deprecations, from this presence; and lay down that interdicted handfull, with feare and trembling; Bee thou euer a King, let vs bee Priests; The Scepter is thine, let Censers be ours.

What religious heart could do other then relent at so faithfull and iust an admonition? But how hard it is for great persons to yeeld they haue offended? *Vzziah* must not be faulty; what is done rashly shall be born out with power; He was wroth; and thus expresses it: What meanes this saucy expostulation, O ye sons of *Levi*? how dare ye thus malapertly controll the well-meant actions of your Soueraigne? If ye be Priests, remember that ye are subiects; or if

if ye will needs forget it, how easie is it for this hand to awake your memory? What such offence can it be for me to come into that house, and to touch that Altar, which my royall Progenitors haue made, beautified, consecrated? Is the God of this place only yours? Why doe ye thus ambitiously ingrosse Religion? If Princes haue not intermedled with these holy affaires, it was because they would not, not because they might not; When those lawes were made for the Sanctuary, there were no Kings to grace these diuine ceremonies; yet euen then, Moses was priuiledged. The persons of Princes (if yee know not) are no lesse sacred then your owne. It is your presumption to

account the Lords anointed, pro-
phane : Contest with those,
whose dry & vnhalloved heads
are subiect to your power ; For
me, I will not aske your leauie to
bee deuout ; Looke yee to your
owne Censers , presume not to
meddle with mine ; In the meane
time, can ye thinke this insolence
of yours shall escape vnreuenged ?
Can it stand with the honour of
my soueraignty, to be thus proudly
checked by subiects ? God doe
so to me and more also, if. Whiles
Vzziah yet speakes, God strikes :
Ere the words of fury can come
forth of his mouth, the leprosie
appeares in his forehead : Leprosie
was a most loathsome disease, the
forehead is the most conspicuous
part : Had this shamefull scurfe
broken

broken forth vpon his hand, or foot, or brest, it might haue been hid from the eyes of men; now the forehead is smitten with this iudgement, that God may proclaine to all beholders, Thus shal it be done to the man whose arrogance hath thrust him vpon a sacred charge. Publique offences must haue open shame.

It is a dangerous thing to put our selues into the affaires, into the presence of God, vnwarranted; There cannot be a more foolish mesprision, then, because we are great on earth, to thinke wee may be bold with heauen: When Gods messengers cannot preuaile by counsels, intreaties, threats, it is time for God to show his imme-diate iudgements. Wilfull offend-
ers

ders can expect nothing but a fearfull reuenge.

Now begins *Vzziah* to be confounded in himselfe ; and shame striues with leprosie, for a place in his forehead, The hand of God hath done that in an instant, which all the tongues of men had attempted in vaine: There needs no further solicitor of his egressse, the sense of his plague sends him forth alone : And now he thinks, Wretched man that I am, how haue I angred God, and vndone my selfe ? I would needs come in like a Priest, I now goe forth a leper : the pride of my hart made me thinke my selfe worthy the presence of a God ; Gods iuit displeasure hath now made me unworthy of the presence of men : whiles

whiles I affected the altar, I haue lost my throne; whiles I stornfully reieected the aduice and censures of Gods ministers , I am now becomme a spectacle of horrour, and deformity, to my owne seruants; I that would be sending vp perfumes to heaué, haue made my nastinesse hatefull to my own senses. What doe I vnder this sacred roofe? Neither is Gods house now, for mee, nor mine owne ; what cell, what dungeon is close enough for me, wherin to weare out the residue of mine vnhappy and vncomfortable dayes? O God thou art iust, and I am miserable.

Thus with a dejected countenance, and sad heart, doth *Vzziah* haft to retire himselfe; & wishes, that he could be no lesse hid from him-

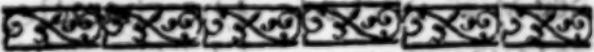
himselfe, then from others : how easie is it for the God of heauen to bring downe the hyest pitch of earthly greatnessse, and to humble the stubbornest pride ?

Vpon the leasure of second thoughts, *Vzziah* cannot but acknowledge much fauour in this correction, and confesse to haue escaped well ; Others, hee knew, had beene strucke dead, or swallow'd vp quick for so presumptuous an intrusion : It is happy for him if his forehad may excuse his soule.

Vzziah ceased not to be a King, when he began to be a leper ; the disease of his forehead did not remoue his Crowne ; his sonne *Iotham* raigned for him, vnder him, and whiles he was not seene, yet hee

hee was obeyed. The character
of soueraignty is indeleble, whe-
ther by bodily infirmity, or by
spirituall censure : Neither is it o-
therwise, O God, betwixt thee,
and vs, if we be once a royll ge-
neration vnto thee, our leprolies
may deform vs, they shall not
dethrone vs: stil shall we haue the
right, still the possession of that
glorious kingdome, wher-
in wee are inuested
from eternitie.

from eternity.



A H O A Z with his new Altar.

2 King. 16.



After many vnhappy changes of the two thrones; *Ahaz* succeeds *Iotham* in the Kingdome of *Iudah*: an ill sonne of a good father; not more the heire of *Dauids* seat, then of *Ieroboams* sinne: Though *Israel* play the harlot, yet who can abide that *Iudah* should sin? It is hard not to be infected with a contagious neighbourhood: who euer read that the Kingdome of *Israel* was seasoned with the vicinity of the true religion

gion of *Judah*? Goodnesse (such as our nature is) is not so apt to spread: A tainted ayre doth more easily affect a sound body, then an wholsome ayre can cleare the sick: Superstition hath ever bin more successefull, then truth: The yong yeares of *Ahaz* are soone mis-led to a plausible mis-denotio.

A man that is once faine from truth, knowes not where he shall stay: From the Calues of *Herobo-am* is *Ahaz* drawne to the gods of the heathen; yea, now, buls and goates are too little for those new deities, his owne flesh and blood is but deare enough; *He made his son to passe through their fire*: Where doe we finde any religious *Israelite* thus zealous for God? Neither doth the holinesse and merci-

cy of our God require so cruell a sacrifice: neither is our dull, and niggardly hand ready to gratifie him with more easie obediences; O God! how gladly should wee offer unto thee our soules, and bodies, which wee may injoy so much the more, when they are thine; since zealous Pagans sticke not to leefe their owne flesh, and blood in an Idols fire? ~~out, down~~
He that hath thus shamefully cast off the God of his fathers, cannot bee long without a fearefull reuenger. The King of *Israel* galls him in the one side; the King of *Syria* on the other: To aviod the shocke of both, *Ahab* doth not betake himselfe to the God who he had offended; who was able to make his enemis at peace with

with him, but to *Tiglath Pileser* King of *Ashur*: Him doth hee wooc with suits, with gifts; and robs God of those presents, which may indeare so strong an helper. Hee that thought not his son too deare for an Idol, thinkes not Gods siluer and gold too deare for an Idolatrous abettor.

Oh the infinite patience of the Almighty! God giues successe a while to so offensive a riuality: This *Affyrian* King preuailes against the King of *Syria*, kills him, and takes his chiefe City, *Damascus*; The quarrell of the King of *Iudah* hath inlarged the territories of his affistant, beyond hope; And now, whiles this *Affyrian* victor is injoying the possession of his new-won *Damascus*: *Ahab*

editorial

M

goes

goes vp thither to meet him, to congratulatethe victory, to adde vnto those triumphs, which were drawne on by his solicitation. There hee sees a new fashion'd Altar, that pleases his eye ; That old forme of *Salomons*, which was made by the pattern shewd to *Moses* in the Mount, is now growne stale, and despicable ; A modell of this more exquisite frame is sent to *Vrijah*, the Priest, and must be sampled in *Jerusalem*. It is a dangerous presumption to make innouations, if but in the circumstances of Gods worship. Those humane additions which would seeme to grace the institution of God, deprauet it. That infinite wisedome knowes best what will please it selfe, and pre-

scribes accordingly; The foolishness of God is wiser then the wisdom of man; Idolatry and falsehood is commonly more gaydy and plausible, then truthe. That hart which can for the outward holinesse despise the ordinances of God, is already alienated from true religion, and lyes open to the grossest superstition.

Never any Prince was so foully idolatrous, at that he wanted a Priest to second him; And Abijah is fit to humor an Abazar; A Greatnesse neuer coul commando any thing, which some serviler wits were not ready bothe to applaud, and justify; in diuine or mortall

Ere the King can be returned from Damaske, pheblak is finisched, obweare happy life gegeboen
King M 2 linesse

lindesse could be so forward in the prosecution of good: Neither is this strange pile reared onely, but shewst vp betwixt Gods altar, and the temple; in an apparent pre-
dency, as if he said, Let the God of *Judah* come behind the Deities of *Syria*.

And now, to make vp the full measure of his impiety, this idolatrous King will himselfe be sacrifizing vpon his new altar, to his new gods; the gods of *Damascos*: An usurped priesthood well becomes a false Deity. Because (saith he) the gods of the Kings of *Syria* helpe them, therefore will I sacrifize to them, that they may helpe me.

Oh blinde superstition! how did the gods of *Syria* helpe their

Kings, when both those Kings,
and their gods were vanquished;
and taken by the King of Affynia.
Even this *Damastua*, and this al-
tar were the spoyle of a forraigne
enemy; How then did the gods of
Syria helpe their Kings, any other,
then to their ruine? what doteage
is this to make choice of a foyled
protection? But had the Syrians
prospered, must their gods haue
the thanks? Are there no authors
of good but blocks or Devils? Or
is an obward prosperity the onely
argument of truthe, the onely
motive of deuotion? O foolish
Abaz, it is the God thou hast for-
saken, that plagues thee, vnder
whose onely arme thou mightest
haue preuailed. His power beats
those Pagan stockes, one against

other, &c) as for nowthile, one seems
youthfull, another vanquisht,
and last hee confounds both,
together with their proudest di-
mens: Thy selfe shal be the best
in stangereis bib nos woh, v. m.

¶ Of all the Kings of Judah hi-
therto there is none so dreadfull
an example either of sin or iudge-
ment as chission of good Iotham,
but hee thinke that such a mon-
ster should not come from the
laynes of David; both and shall bee
the periodes of this wickednesse.
Hee began neare with the highest places
wher hee comens to the Valles
of Marland Bethel, from thence
hee falls to a Syriac altar, to the Sy-
riac god, then from a pasturiship
hee falls to an utter exclusion of
the true God, and blocking vp
redorre. § M his

his Temple ; and then to the sacrifice of his owne sonne ; and at last, as if hell were broken loose vpon Gods inheritance, every seuerall City, euery hie place of *Judah* hath a new god : No matuell if he bee branded by the Spirit of God , with , *This is that King Ahaz.*

What a fearfull plague did this noysome deluge of sin leuite behind it, in the land of *Judah*? who can expresse the horror of Gods reuenge vpō a people that shoulde haue beeene his ? *Pekah* the King of *Israel*, slew an hundred and twentie thousand of them in one day ; amongst whom was *Maseiah* the sonne of *Ahaz* : O iust judgement of the Almighty ! *Ahaz* sheds the blood of one sonne

to an idoll : The true God sheds
the blood of another of his sons,
in reuenge.

Yet, the hand of the Lord is
stretched out still :

Two hundred thousand of
them were caried away by the
Israelites captiueto Samaria :

The *Edomites* came, and caried
away another part of them for
bondslaves, to their country :

The *Philistines* came up and
shar'd the Cities of the south of
Iudah, and the villages thereof;
Shortly, what other is miserable
Iudah, then the prey, and spoile of
all the neighbouring Nations ?

For the Lord brought *Iudah* low be-
cause of *Abaz King of Israel*, for he
made *Iudah* naked, and transgressed
fore against the Lord : As for the

great King of *Ashur*, whom *Aha^r* purchased with the sacrilegious pillage of the house of God, instead of an ayd, hee proves a burden; How evet he spodid his first onsets; now, *hee distressed Iudah*, *but strengthened it not*: The charge was as great, as the benefit small: sooner shall hee eat them out, then rescue them. No arme of flesh can shelter *Aha^r* from a vengeance.

² Chr. 28.
10.

Be wise, o ye Kings, be instructed o yee Judges of the earth; serue the Lord with feare, and rejoyce with trembling: Kisse the Sonne lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.

His subiects complaine, that he died so late, and, as repenting that
hee

he cures was, deny him a roome
in the sepulchers of Kings: as if
they said, the common earth of
Jerusalem is too good for him that
degenerated from his Progeni-
-itors, marr'd his kingdome, &
depraved his people,
forsooke his
God; & now
is left the longest day.
No time
to help can intercede, & make him
reconcile

peace o' the King, & quiet
o' the people of the earth,
which o' the world will be
the chiefest: **The**
people left the earth may have
now set their hand
to work, & establish
a new world, & a
new empire, & a
new church, & a
new state, & a
new law, & a
new government,
but not of both
good

The utter **Destruction** of the
Kingdome of ISRAEL.



*Idah was far a sore
heave; and yet Israel
shall smite it be-
fore it; such are the
fury of both, that
they strive whether shall fall first;
but this lot must light upon the
ten Tribes; though the late King
of Idah were personally worse
than she most effeminate suc-
cessors; yet, the people were gene-
rally less guilty upon whom the
inextricaments of Idolatry were
more by obmission, than by con-
sent;*

2 King. 17.

sent; besides that the thrones of *Iudah* had some interchanges of good Princes, *Israel* none at all: The same iustice therefore that made *Israel* a scourge to *Iudah*, made *Affyria* a scorpion to *Israel*.

It was the quartell of *Iudah* that first ingaged the King of *Affyria* in this warre against *Israel*; now he is not so easily fletch off; So we haue seen some eager ma-
strie, that hath beeene set on by the least clap of the hand; but could not bee loosned by the force of
staues. *Salmacher* King of *Affyria* comes vp against *Hoshea* King of *Israel*, and subdues him; and puts him to his Tribute. This yoke was vncouth and vnplessing; The vanquisht Prince was nei-
ther

ther able to resist, nor willing to yeeld; secretly therefore he treats with the King of Egipt for assistance, as desiring rather to hazard his liberty by the hand of an equal, then to enjoy a quiet subjection vnder the hand of an ouer-ruling power; wee cannot blame Princes to bee iealous of their soueraignties; The detaining of his yearly Tribute, and the whisperings with new confederates, haue drawne vp the King of Ashur to perfect his owh victories: He returnes therefore with a strong power, and after three yeares siege, takes Samaria, imprisons Hoshea, and in the ex-change of a wofull captiuitie, he peoples Israel with Assyrians, and Assyria with Israelites. Now that
abused

abused soyle hath vpon a surfe of wickednesse, cast out her perfidious owners, and will try how it can fare with heathenish strangers. Now the *Affyrian* gallants triumph in the Palaces of *Samaria* and *Iezreel*, whiles the Peeres and Captaines of *Israell* are driuen manicled through the *Affyrian* streets, and billeted to the seuerall places of their perpetuall seruite : Shortly, now the flourishing Kingdome of the tenne Tribes is come to a finall and shamefull end, and so vanished in this last dissipation; that, since that day, no man could euer say; *This is Israel*. An abominable & execrable example of vengeance, vpon that peculiar people, whom God hath chosen for himselfe,

selfe, out of all the world : All the world were witnesses of the fauours of their miraculous deliu-rances, and protections ; All the world shall be witnesses of their iust confusion.

It is not in the power of sleight errors to set off that infinite mercy : What was it, & God, What was it, that caused thee to cast off thine owne inheritance ? What but the same that made thee to cast the Angells out of heaven ? Euen their rebellious sins. Those sins dared to emulate the great-nesse of thy mercies, no lesse then they forced the severity of thy judgments : They left all the com-mandements of the Lord their God, and made them molten Images, even two Calves ; and made a grove and

wor-

worshipped all the host of heauen ; and serued Baal ; and caused their sonnes and daughters to passe through the fire, and vsed diuination, and enchantments, and sold themselues to doe euill in the sight of the Lord to prouoke him to anger.

Neither were these slips of frailty, or ignorant mis-takings, but wilfull crimes, obstinate impieties, in spight of the doctrines, reproofes, menaces, miraculous conuictions of the holy Prophets, which God sent amongst them : Thy destruction is of thy selfe, o Israel ; what could the iust hand of the Almighty doe lesse then consume a nation so incorrigibly flagitious ? A nation so unthankfull for mercies, so impatient of remedies, so vncapable of repen-tance :

tance: so obliged, so warned, so shamelessly, so lawlessly wicked? What nation vnder heaven can now challenge an yndefaisible interest in God; byhen Israel it selfe is cast off? what Church in the world can shew such deare loue tokenis from the Alnaightly as this, now abhorred, and adulterous spouse? Hee that spared not the naturall Olive, shall hee spare the wild? It is not for vs sinners of the Gentiles to be high-minded, but awfull.

The Israelites are carryed captiue into *Affyria*; those goodly Cities of the ten tribes may not lie wast, and vnpeopled: The wisedome of the victor findes it fit to transplant his owne Colonies thither; that so he may raise profit there.

N

with

with security: From Babylon therefore, and Cuthah, and Aua, and Hamath, and Sepharuaim, doth he send of his owne subiects to possesse, and inhabit the Cities of Samaria. The land doth noe brook her new Tenants: They feared not the Lord; (how should they, they knew him not?) Therefore the Lord sent Lyons amongst them which slew some of them: Not the veriest Pagan can bee excused for his ignorance of God; Even the depravedst nature might teach vs to tremble at a Deity; It is just with the Almighty not to putt up neglect, where hee hath bestowed reason.

The brute creatures are sent to reuenge the evill of their Maister, vpon worse beasts, then them.

themselves. Still hath God left himselfe Champions in Israel: Lyons teare the Assyrians in pieces, and put them in mind; that had it not beeene for wickednesse, that land needed not to haue changed masters. The great Lord of the world cannot want meanes to plague offenders. If the men bee gone, yet the beasts are there; And if the beasts had beeene gone, yet so long as there were stones in the wals, in the quarries, God would be fure of auengers. There is no security but in being at peace with God.

The King of Assyria is sued to, for remedy: Euen these Pagans have learned to know that these Lyons were sent from a God, that this punishment is for sinne;

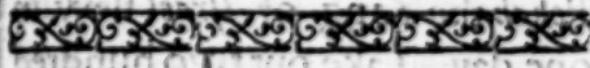
They know not the manner of the God
of the land, therefore he hath sent Ely-
ons among them. These blind Hea-
then that thinke every land hath
a severall God, yet hold that God
worthy of his owne worship,
yet hold that worship must bee
grounded vpon knowledge; the
want of that knowledge, punish-
able, the punishment of that want,
just, and diuine: How much
worse then Assyrians are they that
are ready to ascribe all calamities
to nature, to chance, that acknowledge
ledging but one God of all the
world, are yet carelesse to know
him, to serue him, & vniuersall

One of the Priests of Israel
is appointed to be carried backe to
Samaria, to teach the Assyrian Col-
ony the fashions of the God of

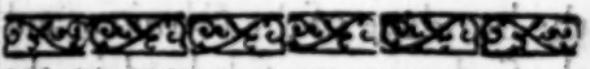
the land; not for deuotion, but for impunity: vaine Politicians thinke to satisfie God by patching vp religions; any formes are good enough for an vnknowne deity: The Assyrian Priests teach, and practise the worship of their own Gods; The Israelitish Priest prescribes the worship of the true God; The people will follow both, the one out of liking, the other out of feare: What a prodigious mixture was here of religions! true with false, Iewish with Paganish, diuine with diuellish; Euery diuision of these transplanted Assyrians had their severall deities, high places, sacrifices; this Priest of *Israel* intercommuns with euery of them: So as now these fathers of Samaritanisme,

nisme, are in at all; They feare the Lord and serue their idols; No beggers cloak is more peeced then the religion of these new inhabitants of *Israel*. I know not how their bodies sped for the Lyons, I am sure their soules fared the worse for this medlie; Above all things God hates a mungrell devotion; If we be not all *Israel*, it were better to bee all *Affur*; It cannot so much displease God to bee vñknowne or neglected, as to bee consorted with Idols.

HEZEKIAH



HEZEKIAH and SENA- CHERIB.




*Srael is gone, Iudah
is left standing; or
rather some few
sprigs of those two
Tribes: so we haue
seen in the shredding of some
large Timber-tree, one or two
boughes left at the top to hold vp
the sap. Who can but lament the
poore remainders of that langu-
ishing kingdome of David?*

*1 Kings 12.
and 19.*

*Take out of the two Tribes of
Iudah, and Beniamin, one hundred
and twenty thousand, whom*

N 4

Pekab

Pekah the King of Israel slew in one day, Take out two hundred thousand that were carried away captiue to Samaria ; Take out those that were transported into the bondage of the Edomites ; and those that were subdued in the South parts, by the Philistines ; alas, what an handfull was left to the king of Judah ; scarce worth the name of a dominion : Yet, even now, out of the gleeds of Judah, doth God raise vp a glorious light to his forlorne Church; yea, from the wretched loynes of Ahaz doth God fetch an holy Ezekiah. It had beeene hard to conceiue the state of Judah yorke then it was; neither was it more miserieable, then sinfull, and in regard of both, desperate; when beyond daies ^Y hope

hope, God revives this dying
stocke of *David*, and out of very
ruines builds vp his owne house.
Ahaz was not more the ill sonne
of a goed father, then he was the
ill father of a good sonne. He was
the ill sonne of good *Iotham*, the
ill father of good *Hezekiah*. Good
Hezekiah makes amends for his
fathers impietie, and puts a new
life into the hartlesse remnant of
Gods people.

The wisedome of our good
God knowes when his ayd will
bee most seasonable, most wel-
come; which hee then loues to
giue, when he findes vs left of all
our hopes: That mercifull hand
is reserved for a dead lift; then he
failes vs not.

Now, you might haue seene
this

this pious Prince busily bestirring himselfe, in so late and needfull a reformation, remouing the high places, battering and burning the Idolls, demolishing their temples, cutting downe their groues, opening the Temple, purging the altars, and vessels, sanctifying the Priests, rekindling the Lampes, renewing the incense, reinstituting the sacrifices, establishing the order of Gods seruice , appointing the courses , settling the maintenance of the ministers, publishing the decrees for the long-neglected Passouer ; celebrating it, and the other feasts, with due solemnity, encouraging the people, contributing bountifullly to the offerings , and, in one word, so ordering all the affayres of God,

as if hee had boone sent downe
from heauen to restore Religion ;
as if *David* himself had been aliue
againe in this blessed heyre, not
so much of his Crowne, as of his
piety. Oh *Iudas*, happy in thy *E-
zekiah*, Oh *Ezekiah* happy in the
gratiouse restauration of thy *Iu-
dah*: *Ahas* shall haue no thanke
for such a sonne; The God that
is able of the very stones to
raise children to *Abraham*, rayses
a true seed of *David* out of the cor-
rupt loynes of an Idolater : That
infinite mercy is not tyed to the
termes of an immediate propaga-
tion: For the space of three hun-
dred yeares, the man after Gods
owne heart had no perfect heyre
till now; Till now did the high
places stand : the deuotions of
the

the best Princes of Iudah were blenched with some weake omis-
sions; Now the zeale of good
Ezekiah cleares all those defects,
and workes an intyre change.

¶ How seasonably hath the pro-
vidence of God kept the best man
for the worst times? When God
hath a great worke to doe, hee
knowes to fit himselfe with in-
struments.

No manuell if the Paganish Id-
olls goe to vracke, vwhen euен
the brazen Serpent that *Moses* had
made by Gods owne appoin-
ment, is broken in peeces: The
Israelites were stung with fiery
Serpents, this brazen Serpent hea-
led them, which they did no soo-
ner see, then they recovered. But
now, such was the iuenome of
the

the Israelitish Idolatry ; that this Serpent of brass ; stung worse than the fiery ; That, which first cured by the eye ; now by the eye poisoned the soul ; That which was at first, the type of a Saviour ; is now, the deadly engine of the Enemy. Whiles it helped it stood ; it stood whiles it hurt not ; but when once wicked abuse hath turned it into an Idoll ; what was it but Nebuchadnezzar's Scorpion ? The believeth of the first institution cannot be diviled enough from the danger of a future profanation ; nor, das the easiness may shew, from vapours of abolition. What antiquity, or what antiquity ; what primary scripture might this Serpent have pleaded ? All that can be kept is dust & the dust.

Those

Those things which are necessary in their being, beneficially in their continuance, may still remaine when their abuse is purged; but those things whose vse is but temporary, or whose duration is needless & unprofitable, may deal wiþ the occasion, and much more perish with an inseparable abuse. *Ezekiel* willingly forgets who made the Serpent, when he sees the *Israelites* make it an idol: It is no lesse intolerable for God, to haue a iuuall of his owne makinge vñ most vsinnes. *Ezekiel* was thus abouit all diuers other stors, as y pright, by wiþ the Lord; it is no vnaptiell, if the Lord rigore with hym, as he did spearell, vñwhiles he quarells wþ hym; This fauor God that you like haue stored

his

his justice magnified in the confu-
sion of the wicked Princes of Is-
rael, and Judah, would haue his
mercy no lesse acknowledged, in
the blessings of faithfull Hezekiah.

The great King of Assyria had
in a sort swallowed vp both the
Kingdomes of Judah, and Israel;
yet not with an equall cruelty; He
made Israel captiue, Judah (vpon
a willing composition) tributary.
Israel is vanished in a transpora-
tion, Judah continues vnder the
homage wherein Abaz left it: He-
zekiah had reigned but sixe yeares
when he saw his neighbours of
Israel packing into a miserable
capaunity, & the proud Assyrians
lodging in their Cities; yee, even
then, when hee stood alone, in
a corner of Judah, durst Hezekiah
draw

draw his necke out of the yoke
of the great, and victorious Mo-
narch of Assyria; and, as if one
enemey had not beeine enough, at
the same time, hee falls vpon the
increaching Philistines, and Ipre-
uailes. It is not to be asked, what
powerts a man can make, but in
what termes he stands with hea-
uen. The vnyworthy father of He-
zekiah had clogged Iudah with this
seruile fealty to the Assyrian; what
the conditions of that vassallation
were, it is too late, and needless
for vs so inquire, if this payment
were limited to a period of time,
the expiration whereof acquited him, if
upon conuenants of ayd, the cessa-
tion thereof acquited him; if the
reforming of religion, or banish-
ment of Idolatry, and under the
censure
wch

censure of rebellion, the quarrell on *Ezekiabs* part, was holy, on *Senacheribs* vniust: but if the resti-
pulation were absolute, and the
withdrawing of this homage vp-
on none but ciuill grounds, I can-
not excuse the good King from a
iust offence: It was an humane
frailty in an obliged Prince by
force to affect a free and indepen-
dant soueraignty.

What doe we mince that fact,
which holy *Ezekiah* himself cen-
sures? *I haue offended, returne from
mee, w^that thou putst on mee w^till I
bear?* The comfort of liberty
may not be had with an vnwar-
ranted violence: Holinesse can-
not free vs from infirmitie: It was
a weaknes to doe that act, which
must bee soone vndone with
flussh

O much

much repentance, and more losse; This revolt shall cost Ezekiel (besides much humiliation) three hundred yearly talents of siluer, thirty talents of gold: How much better had it bee[n] for the Cities of Iudah to have purchased their peace with an easie tribute, then warre with an intolerable taxation.

Fourteene yeare had good Hezekiah fed upon a sweet peace, sauored only with a set pension; now he must prepare his pallat for the bitter mortis of warre. The King of Assyria is come up against all the defenced Cities of Iudah, and hath taken them: Ezekial is faine to buy him out with too many talents; The poore Kingdome of Iudah is exhumed. O haust,

haust, with so deepe a payment; in so much as the King is forced to borrow of God himselfe, for Hezekiah gaue him all the siluer that was found in the house of the Lord; yea, at that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doores of the temple of the Lord, and from the pillars which he had over-laid, and gaue it to the King of Assyria. How hard was good Hezekiah driven, ere he would be thus bold with his God? Surely if the onines, or dauers of Iudah could haue yeelded any supply; this shif had bee ne barefull, to fetch back for avenging my selfe, that which hee had givene to his Makere. Only necessity excuseth that from sacrefadge in the sonne, in which will, made sacrefadge in the father: That vnde-

is once deuoted to a sacred vse,
may not be called backe to a pro-
fane. : But he whose the earth is,
and the fulnesse of it, is not so ta-
ken with our metals , that hee
should more regard our gold,
then our welfare : His goodnes
cannot grudge any outward
thing for the price of our peace .
**To rob God out of covetous-
nesse, or wantonnesse, or neglect**
is iustly damnable ; wee cannot
robbe him out of our need; for
then he giues vs all we take; and
bids vs ransome our liues, our li-
berties ; The treasures of Gods
house were precious, for his sake;
to whom they were consecrated;
but more precious in the sight of
the Lord was the life of any one
of his Saints .

Euery

Every true *Israelite* was the spirituall house of God; why shoulde not the doore of the materiall temple bee willingly stripped, to saue the whole frame of the spirituall Temple. Take therefore, O *Hezekiah* what thou hast giuen, no gold is too holy to redeeme thy vexation: It matters not so much how bare the doores of the Temple bee, in a case of neceffity, as how wel the insides be furnished with sincere deuotion. O the cruell hard hartednesse of those men which will rather suffer the liuing Temples of God to be ruined, then they will ransome their life, with farthings.

It could not bee, but that the store of needy *Iudah* must soone be drawne dry with so deepe an

exaction; that sum cannot be sent, because it cannot be raised : The Ieruall Tyran calls for his brickes whiles he allowves no straw; His langer is kindled because *Ezekias* cofers haue a botomie; with a mighty hoste doth he come vp against *Ierusalem*; therefore shal that City be destroyed by him; because by him it hath bin impouerished; the inhabitants must bee slaves; because they are beggers.

Oh lamentable, and in sight, desperate condition of distressed *Ierusalem*: wealth it had none; strength it had, but a little; all the Country round about was subdued to the *Affyrian*; that proud victor hath begirt the wals of it, with an innumerable army, scorning that such a shouell full of

earth should stand out but one day; Poore *Ierusalem* stands alone, block't vp with a world of enemies, helplesse, friendlesse, somfortlesse; looking for the worst of an hostile fury; when *Tartan* and *Rabsaris*, and *Rabshakeh*, the great Captaines of the *Affyrians*, call to a parlee. *Hezekiah* lends to them three of his prime officers, his Steward, his Secretary, his Recorder. Lord; What insolent blasphemies doth that foule mouth of *Rabshakeh* belch out against the liuing God,against his anointed seruant?

How plausibly doth hee discourage the subiects of *Ezekiah*, how proudly doth hee insult vpon their impotency, how doth he braue them with base offers of

wor

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aduantage; and lastly, how cunningly doth he fore-lay their confidence (which was onely left them) in the Almighty, protestinge not to bee come vp hither without the Lord; *The Lord said to me, Goe vp to this land, and destroy it.* How fearfull a word was this? The rest were but vaine crackes, this was a thunderbolt to strike dead the heart of *Ezekiah*; If *Rab-shakeh* could haue been beleeuued, *Ierusalem* could not but haue flowne open; How could it think to stand out no lesse against God, then men? Euen thus doth the great enemy of mankind; if hee can dis-hearten the soule from a dependance vpon the God of mercies, the day is his: Lewd miscreants care not how

how they be-lye God for their
owne purposes.

Eliakim the steward of *Heze-*
kiah well knew, how much the
people must needes bee affected
with this pernicious suggestion;
and faine would therefore, if not
stop that wicked mouth, yet di-
uert these blasphemies into a for-
raigne expression. I wonder
that any wise man should looke
for fauour from an enemy: Speak
I pray thee, to thy seruants in the Sy-
rian language: What was this but
to teach an aduersary hovv to doe
mischief? Wherfore came *Rab-*
shakeh thither but to gall *Ezekiah,*
to vwith-drawv his subiects? That
tongue is properest for him
vwhich may hurt most; Depreca-
tions of euill to a malicious man
are

are no better then aduices. An unknowne idiome is fit to keepe counsell; they are familiar words that must convey ought to the vnderstanding. Leud men are the worse for admonitions.

Rabshakeb had not so strained his throat, to corrupt the citizens of *Ierusalem*, had it not beene for the humble obtestation of *Elia-kim*. Now he reares vp his voyce, and holds his sides, and roares out his double blasphemies; one while affrighting the people with the great power of the mighty king of *Affyria*; another while debasing the contemptible force of *Hezekiah*; now smoothly alluring them, with the assurances of a safe and successfull yeeldance; then discouraging them with the

im-

impossibility of their deliverance; laying before them the fearfull examples of greater nations vanquished, by that sword, which was now shaken ouer them ; triumphing in the impotency, and mis-carriage of their gods : Who are they among all the Gods of the countrey, that haue delivered their Countrey out of mine hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand ? Where are the Gods of Arpad, and of Hamath ? Where, but in that hellish darknesse, that is ordained both for them, and for thee, barbarous Assyrian, that darest thus open thy mouth against thy Maker : And can thole Atheous eyes of thine see no differēce of Gods ? Is there no distance betwixt a stocke, or stone, and that infinite

Deity

Deity that made heauen & earth?
It is enough that thou now feeleſt
it; thy torments haue taught thee
too late, that thou affrontedſt a
liuing God.

How did the fingers & tongues
of these Lewiſh Peeres and people,
itch to be at Rabshakeb; in a re-
uengefull answer to thofe impie-
ties: All is whuſht; not a word
ounds from thofe valls: I doe
not more wonder at Hezekiahs
wisedome, in commanding fu-
lence, then at the ſubiects obedi-
ence, in keeping it; This rayler
could not be more ſpighted, then
with no anſwer; and if he might
be exasperated, he could not bee
reformed; besides, the reboun-
ding of thofe multiplyed blaſphem-
ies, might leauē ſome ill im-
pressions

pressions in the multitude; This sulphurous flaske, therefore, dyes in his owne smoke: onely leaving an hatefull stench behind it.

b Good *Hezekiah* cannot easily passe ouer this deuillish oratory; no sooner doth he heare of it, then he rends his clothes, and couers himselfe with sack-cloth, and betakes himselfe to the house of the Lord, and sends his officers, and the grauest of the Priests, clad in sack-cloth, to *Esay* the Prophet of God, with a dolefull and querulous message.

Oh the noble piety of *Hezekiah*; notwithstanding all the straits of the siege, and the danger of so powerfull an enemy; I find not the garments of this good King, any otherwise then
whole,

whole, and vnchanged; but now so soon as euer a blasphemy is vttered against the Majestie of his God, (though by a Pagan dog) his clothes are torne, and turned into sack-cloth: There can bee no better argument of an vpright heart, then to be more sensible of the indignities offered to God, then of our owne dangers. Even these desperate reproches send Ezequiah to the Temple; The more we see Gods name profaned, the more shall we, if we be truely religious, loue and honor it.

Whither should Ezequiah run but to the Temple, to the Prophet? There, there is the refuge of all faithfull ones, wherethey may speake with God, where they may bee spoken to from God, and

and fetch comfort from both: It
is not possible that a belieueng
heart shoulde bee disappointed:
Isaiah sends that message to the
good King, that may dry vp his
teares, and cheere his countenace,
and change his sute, *Ithus saith the
Lord, Be not afraid of the wordes
which thou hast heard, with whiche the
servants of the King of Syria haue
blasphemed me; Behold I will send a
blast upon him; and hee shall beare a
rumour, and shall returne to his owne
Land; and I will cause him to fall by
the sword in his owne Land.* *Come
Iodie,* euern whiles Senacherib
was in the height of his iollity &
assurance, Gods Prophet fore-
seeth his huine, and giues him for
dead; whiles that Tyrant thought
of nothing but life and victory.
Proud

Proud & secure worldlings little
dreame of the neere approach of
their iudgements : whiles they
are plotting their deepest de-
signes, the ouer-ruling iustice of
the Almighty hath contriued
their sudden confusion, and sees,
and sets them their day.

Rabshakeb returnes, and find-
ing the King of Assyria warring
against Libnah, reports to him
the silent, (and therein) contemp-
tuos answer, and firme resolu-
tions of Hezekiah ; In the meane
time God pulls Senacherib by the
ear, with the nerves of the ap-
proching army of Turhakah King
of Ethiopia, whidh was comming
vp to raise the siege ; and to inc-
ourage his confederats : That dead
full power will not alldowne the
huorq

Affyrian

Affuriam King, in person to lead his other forces vp against Jerusalēm, nor to continue his former League long before those walls. But now, hee writes big words to *Hezekiah*, and thinks with his thundering menaces to beat open the gates, and leuell the bulwarks of *Jerusalem*: Like the true master of *Rabshakeh*, hee reviles the God of Heaven, and basely parallels him with the dunghill deities of the heathen.

Good *Ezekiah* gets him into his Sanctuary; there he spreads the letters before the Lord; and calls to the God that dwelleth between the Cherubims, to reuenge the blasphemies of *Senacherib*, to protect and rescue himself, and his people. Every one of those words

P

pierced

pierced heauen; which was no
lesse open to mercy vnto Her-
kib, then vengeance to Sarath-
iel. Now is Izaiah addresed with
a rounde message of comforte
vnto him, who doubtlesse distrusted
not the first: onely the reiteration
of that furious blasphemie made
him take faster hold, by his faith-
full devotion. Now, the ieal-
ous God in a distaine of so blas-
phemous a contestation, rises vp
in a stile of Majestie, and glor-
iously triumples vpon this saucie
insolency. Because thy rage against
me, and thy tumult is come up into
mine ears; therefore I will put my
hand into thy nose, and my bridle into
thy lips: and will turne this backe
by the way thou comest hither. Sim-
ilarly, the God of heauen makes
himselfe

a beast of thee; wch hast so basly
spurned at his name? If thou be a ravenous beast, he
hath an hooke fit to thy mouth; If thou be a
resty horse, he hath a bridle for thy mouth; In spight
of these, thou shal follow his hooke or his bridle; and shal be
led to thy iust shame by either;

It is noo for vs to bde the Lords
of our owne actions; This saith
the Lord concerning the King of Syria;
He shall not come into this land,
nor shal an arrowe strike his comrade
fore it. nighly shield yon castabankes
gainside by the way that he came, shall
be returned, & with the portent thereof,
what are we in the hands of the
Almighty? we purpose, he doeth
rule, & we talk of great matters,
and think to doe wonders; he

blotches vpon our projects; and they vanish with our selues; He that hath set bounds to the Sea, hath appointed limits to the rage of the proudest enemies; yea, even the Deuils themselues are confi-
ned; Why boast yee your selues, O ye Tyrans, that ye can doe mis-
chiefe; yee are stimated; and even
within those limits, is confusion.

O the Trophets of divine Iu-
stice, That very night the Angell of
the Lord went out, and smote in the
campe of the Assyrians an hundred
four score & five thousand; and when
they arose early in the morning, be-
hold they were all dead corporall
and How inspeidly man's execution
was this, how miraculous! No
humane armie shall haue the glo-
ry of this victory, It was God that
reswold s. P. was

was defied by that presumptuous *Affyrian*; It is God that shall right his owne wrongs; Had the *Egyptian*, or *Ethyopian* forces beene come vp, though the same God had done this worke by them, yet some praise of this slaughter had perhaps cleau'd to their fingers. Now an inuisible hand sheds all this blood; that his very enemies may cleare him frō all partnership of reuenge. Go now, wicked *Senacherib*, and tell of the gods of *Hamath* and *Arpad*, and *Sepharudim*, and *Hena*, & *Iuah*, which thou hast destroyed, and say, that *Hezekiahs* God is but as one of these: Goē, and adde this Deity to the number of thy conquests: Now, say that *Ezekiahs* God in whom hee trusted hath

deceiuied him, and graced thy
Tryumphes. With shame and griefe enough
is that sneaped Tyran returned to
his Ninive, having left behinde
him, all the pride and strength of
Assyria, for compost to the Iewish
fields. Well were it for thee, o
Senacherib, if thou couldst escape
thus; vengeance waits for thee at
home, and welcomes thee into
thy place; whiles thou art wor-
shipping in the house of Nisroch
thy god, two of thine own sons
shall be thine executioners. See
now, if that false Deity of thine
can preserue thee fro that stroke
which the true God sends thee
by the hand of thine owne flesh;
Hee that slew thine hoast by his
Angell, slayes thee by thy sonnes;

The

The same Angell that killed all those thousands, could as easily haue smitten thee; but he rather reserues thee for the further torment of an vn naturall stroke, that thou mayest see too late, how easie it is for him in spight of thy God to arme thine oyvne loynes against thee.

Thou art auenged, O God, thou art auenged plentifully of thine enemies. Whosoever striues with thee, is sure to gaine nothing but losse, but shame, but death, but hell. The *Affyrians* are flaine; *Senacherib* is rewarded for his blasphemey: *Jerusalem* is resued; *Ezakiel* reioyces, the nations wonder and tremble. O loue the Lord, & ye his Saints, for the Lord preserveth the faifthfull, & plenteously rewarded the proud doer.

E Z E K I A H sicke, recomed, visited.

1 King. 20.



Ezekiah was freed from the siege of the *Affyrians*, but hee is surprised with a disease: he that deliuered him from the hand of his enemies, smites him with sicknesse: God doth not let vs loose from all afflictions, when he redeemes vs from one.

To thinke that *Ezekiah* was either not thankfull enough for his deliurance, or too much lifted vp with the glory of so mira-

culous

culous a fauour ; were an iniuri-
ous misconstruction of the hand
of God ; and an uncharitable cen-
sure of an holy Prince : For,
though no flesh and blood can
auoid the iust desert of bodily pu-
nishment, yet God doth not al-
wayes strike with an intuition of
sinne ; sometimes he regards the
benefit of our triall ; sometimes
the glory of his mercy in our
cure.

It was no sleight distemper,
that seized vpon *Ezekiah*, but a di-
sease both painfull, and fierce, and
in nature deadly. O God, how
thou lashest euен those whom
thou louest : Hadst thou euer any
such dearling in the throne of *Iu-*
dah, as *Hezekiah*? Yet he no soone-
r breatheth from a miserable
no^t siege,

siege, then hee panteth vnder a
mortall sicknesse : when as yethe
had not so much, as the comfort
of a child, to succeed him, thy
Prophet is sent to him with the
heavy message of his death, *Set
thine house in order, for thou shalt dye
and not live.* It is no small mercy
of God that he giues vs warning
of our end ; we shall make an ill
use of so gratious a premonition,
if we make not a meet preparati-
on for our passage. Euen those
that haue not an house, yet haue a
soule ; no soule can want impor-
tant affaires to be ordered for a fi-
nall dissolution ; the neglect of
this best thrift is desperate. Set thy
soule in order, & man, for thou
shalt dye, and not live.

If God had giuen Ezekiah a
son,

son, nature had bequeathed his estate; now, hee must study to find heires: Even these outward things, (though in themselues worthlesse) require our carefull disposition, to those we leauie behind vs; and if wee haue delayed these thoughts, till then, our sicke beds may not complaine of their importunity; We cannot leauie to our families a better legacy, then Peace.

Never was the Prophet *Esay* unwelcome to this good King, vntill now: Even sad tidings must be caried by those messengers, which would be faithfull: neither may wee regard so much how they will bee taken, as by whom they are sent.

It was a bold and harsh word
to

to say to a King, *Thou shalt dye, and not live*: I doe not heare *Ezekiah* rage, & fret at the message; or threat the bearer, but he meekly turnes his face to the wall, and weepes, and prayes: Why to the wall? Was it for the greater secrecie of his deuotion? was it for the more freedome from all distraction? was it that the passion which accompanied his prayer, might haue no witnessses? Or, was it for that this wall lookt towards the Temple, which his heart and eyes still moued vnto, though his feet could not?

Howsoeuer, the patient soule of good *Ezekiah* turnes it selfe to that holy God, from whom hee smarts, and bleeds; and poures out it selfe into a fervent deprecation,

tion, I beseech thee, O Lord, remem-
ber now how I haue walked before thee
in truth, and with a perfect hart; and
haue done that which is good in thy
sight.

Couldst thou feare, o *Ezekiah*,
that God had forgotten thine in-
tegrity? The grace that was in
thee, was his own worke; could
he in thee neglect himselfe? Or
dost thou therefore doubt of his
remembrance of thy faithfulness,
because hee summons thee to re-
ceive the crowne of thy faithful-
nesse, glory, and immortality?
wherein canst thou bee remem-
bered, if this bee to forget thee?
What challenge is this? Is God a
debtor to thy perfection? Hath
thine holy carriage merited any
thing from that infinite Justice?

Farre,

Farre, farre were these presumptuous conceits from that humble and mortified soule: Thou hadst hated thine owne brest, if it could once haue harboured so pronda thought. This perfection of thine was no other, then an honest soundnesse of hart, & life, which thou knowest God had promised to reward: It was the mercy of the couenant that thou pleadedst, not the merit of thine obediencie.

Every one of these words were steeped in teares: But what meant these words, these teares? I heare not of any, but moued by *Hely-kiah*; onely he wishes to be remembred, in that whiche could never bee forgotten; though the *should shane intercated for amisses* *hysselfe* *so iniustlye* *as his most grida*
Fare
Speake

to speake out Hezekiah, what is
it that thy teares traue, whiles thy
lips expresse not? O let me dye, and
I shall praise thee, O God. Insubino
and naturall man norie could
wonder at this passionaterequest,
who can but wonder at it, in a
Sainte whose happiness doth
but then begin, when his life cea-
seth a whose misery doth but
then end, when his death enters:
the word offaith, is, *Oh let me dye,*
that I may enjoy thee. How then
doth the good King crye at the
newes of that death, which some
desolato Ragans haue intartained
with smiles? Certainly, the best
man cannot strip himselfe of some
flesh, and whiles nature hath an
unremovable hold into hitherto has done
not but certaine some smalnesse
of

the

the sweetnesse of life, or the horror of dissolution; Both these were in *Hezekiah*, neither of them could transport him into this passion: they were higher respects that swayed with so holy a Prince, a tender care of the glory of God, a carefull pitty of the Church of God; His very teares said; ô God, thou knowest that the eyes of the world are bent upon me, as one that hath abandoned their idolatry, and restored thy sincere worship; I stand alone in the midst of a wicked and idolatrous generation, that lookes thorough all my actions; shall my enemies; If now they shall see me snatched away in the midst of my dayes, what will these Heathens say, how can thy great name but suffer in
this

this mine vntimely extinction?

Besides, what will become of thy poore Church, which I shall leaue feebly religious, and as yet scarce warme, in the course of a pious reformation? how soone shall it be miserably ouer-grownne with superstition, and heathenisme; how soone shall the wild Boare of *Affyria* root vp this little vineyard of thine? What need I beseech thee, O Lord, to regard thy name, to regard thine inheritaunce?

What one teare of *Hezekiah* can run waft? What can that good King pray for, unheard, unanswering? *Senacherib* came in a proud confidence to swallow vp his cities and people: prayers and teares send him away confounded:

210

Q

Death

Death comes to swallow vp his person, (and that not without authority) prayers and teares send him away disappointed. Before *Isaiah* was gone out into the middle Court, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, Turne againe, and tell *Hezekiah* the Captaine of my people: Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father; I haue heard thy prayer, I haue seene thy teares, behold I will heale thee; On the third day thou shal goe vp to the house of the Lord; and I will adde to thy dayes fiftene years.

What shall we say then, o God, hast thou thus soone changed thy purpose? Was it not thy true mes-sage which thy Prophet, euen now, deliuered to *Exekias*? Is some what falce ouer that thou diddest force

fore-sawst not ? or, doest thou now decree somewhat thou meantst not ? The very thought of any of these were no better then blasphemous impiety. Certainly, *Hezekiah* could not liue one day longer, then was eternally decreed ; The decree of Gods eternall counsell had from euerlaſting, determined him fifteene yeeres yet longer : Why then doth God say, by his Prophet, *Thou shalt dye, and not liue ?* He is not as man that he ſhould repent ; the message is changed, the will is not changed ; yea rather the message is explicated, not changed ; For the ſignified will of God, though it ſound absolutely, yet muſt bee understood with condition ; that tells *Hezekiah* what hee muſt ex-

pect frō the nature of his disease, what would befall him, without his deprecations : There was nothing but death in the second causes; what euer secret purpose there was in the first; and that purpose shall lye hid for a time, vnder a reserved condition : The same decree that sayes, *Niniue* shall be destroyed, meanes, if *Niniue* repent, it shall not be destroyed; hee that finds good reason to say, *Hezekiah* shall dye, yet still meanes, if the quickned deuotion of *Hezekiah* shall importune mee for life, it shall be protracted. And the same God that hath decreed this addition of fifteene years, had decreed to stirre vp the spirit of *Hezekiah*, to that vehement and weeping importunity, which should obtaine

taine it. O God, thou workest thy good pleasure in vs, and with vs; and by thy reuealed will mouest vs in those wayes, whereby thou effectest thy secret will.

How wonderfull is this mercy? *Hezekiahs* teares are not dry vpon his cheeke, yea his breath is not passed his lips, when God sends him a comfortable answer. How carefull is the God of compassions, that his holy seruant should not languish one houre, in the expectation of his denounced death? What speed was here, as in the errand, so in the act of recovery: within three daies shall *Hezekiah* be vpon his feet; yea his feet shall stand in the Courts of Gods house, he that now in his bed sighes, and groanes, & weeps

out a petition, shall then sing out
a thanksgiving in the Temple.
Oh thou that hearest the prayer,
vnto thee shall all flesh come;
With what cheerfull assurance
shold we approach to the throne
of that grace, which never fayled
any suppliant.

Neither was this grant more
speedie, then bountifull; wee are
wont to reckon seuen yeares for
the life of a man; and now, be-
hold, more then two liues hath
God added to the age of *Heze-
kiah*. How vnexampled a fauour
is this? who euer but *Hezekiah*
knew his period so long before,
the fixednesse of his terme, is no
lesse mercy, then the protraction;
we must be content to liue or die
at uncertainties, w^to are not wor-
thy

thy to calculate the date of our
owne times: *Teach vs, O Lord, so
to number our dayes, that we may ap-
ply our hearts to wisedome.*

There is little ioy in manie daies,
if they be euill; *Ezekiah shall not*
be blessed onely with life; but
with peace; *The proud Assyrian*
threatens an iuasion; his late foyle
still stickes in his stomacke, and
stirs him to a reuenge; the hooke
is in his nostrils, hee cannot
move whither he lists; *The God*
of heauen will maintaine his
owne quarrell, *I will defend this*
City for mine owne sake, and for my
seruant Davids sake. Loe; for this
life, *Ezekiah is beholden (next unto*
the infinite goodnes of God) to his prayers; for his protection
to the deare memory of his fa-

ther David; surely, for ought we
find, Ezekiah was no lesse up-
right, and lesse offensiuē then Da-
uid; yet both Ezekiah and Jerusa-
lem shall fare the better for Da-
uids sake, abouē three hundred
yeares after.

To that man after his owne
heart, had God ingaged himselfe,
by his gracious promise, to pre-
serue his thronē, his seed : God
loues to remenaber his ancient
mercies : How happy a thing it
is to be faithfull with God ; this
is the way to oblige those which
are yet unborne ; and to intayle
blessinḡs upon the successions of
futrie generations. It seemes it was some pestilent
ylcer that thus indangered the life
of Hezekiah. Isaias is not a Pro-
phet

phet only, but a Physician. And *Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs; Hee that gaue an assurance of recovery, giues a receipt for the recovery.* The decree of God includes the meanes: neither can the medicine worke without a word; neither will the word worke without the medicine; both of them must meet in the cure: If we so trust the promise, that we neglect the prescript, we presume to no purpose. Happy is that soule, that so regards the promise of Gods Prophets, as that withall he receiuies their counsells.

Nothing could bee more proper for the ripening of hard and purulent tumors, then dried figs; Herein *Isaias direction was according to nature;* Wherefore should

should wee balke the ordinary road, when it is both fayre and neece?

The sudden contradiction of the message causes a iust difficulty in the assent. *Hezekiah* therefore craves a signe, not for that he dis-trusted, but that hee might trust the more; wee can neuer take too fast hold of those promises of God, which haue not more com-fort in the application, then natu-rall impossibility in the perfor-mance. We beleue, Lord, helpe our vnbelleefe.

The sicke King hath his opti-on; His father was offred a signe and refused it; hee sues for one, and obtaines it; Shall the shadow goe forward ten degrees, or backe ten degrees? As if heauen it selfe lay open

open to his choyce; and were ready either to mend this pace, or retire for his confirmation; What creature is not cheerfully forward to obey the faith of Gods seruants?

Hezekiah fastens rather vpon that signe which is more hard, more disagreeing from the course of nature; not without good reason; Euery proofe must bee clearer then the thing to bee proued, neither may there want a meen proportion betwixt both; now the going forward of the shadow was a motion no other then naturall, the recovery of that pestilent disease was against the stremme of nature; the more difficult signe therefore, the surer eidence.

Whether shall we more wonder

der at the measure of the loue of God to *Hezekiah*, or at the power of *Isaiahs* faith in God? Out of both, either the Sun goes backe in heauen that his shadow may goe backe on earth: or the shadow no lesse miraculously goes backe on earth, whiles the Sunne goes forward in heauen. It is true that the Prophet speakes of the shadow, not of the Sun; except perhaps because the motion of the Sun is best discerned by the shadow; and the motion of the shadow is led by the course of the Sunne: besides, that the demonstration of this miracle is reported to be locall in the Diall of *Abaz*, not vniuersall, in the sensible length of the day; withall, the retrait of the Sunne had made a

pub-

publike and noted change in the frame of nature, this particular alteration of the shadow in places limited, might satisfie no lesse without a confusiuē mutation in the face of the world; Whethersoever to draw the Sun backe together with the shadow; or to draw the shadow backe without the Sunne was the proofe of a diuine omnipotency; able therefore to draw backe the life of *Hezekiah*, fifteene degrees, from the night of death; towards which it was hasting.

O God, thou wilt rather alter the course of heauen and earth, then the faith of thy children shall sink for want of supportation.

It should seeme the *Babylonians* finding the *Affyrian* power abated

ted by the reuengefull hand of Gods Angell, and their owne discord, tooke this aduantage of a reuolt; and now to strengthen their party fall in with *Hezekiah* King of *Iudah*, whom they found the old enemy to the *Affyrians*, & the great fauourite of heauen: him they wooc with gifts; him they congratulate with Ambas-
sages: The fame of *Hezekiah*s sicknesse, recovery, forme, and assurance of cure, haue drawne thither messengers, and presents from *Berodach Baladan* King of *Babylon*.

The *Chatdees* were curious searchers into the secrets of nature, especially into the motions of the celestiall bodies; Though there had beene no politick relations,

tions, this very Astronomicall miracle had beeene enough to fetch them to *Ierusalem*, that they might see the man, for whose sake the Sun forsooke his place, or the shadow forsooke the Sun.

How easily haue we seen those holy men mis-caried by prosperity, against whom no miseries could preuaile? Hee that stood out stoutly against all the *Affyrian* onsets, clinging the faster to his God, by how much he was harder assaulted by *Senacherib*, melteth now with these *Babylonian* fauours, and runnies abroad into offensive weaknesses.

The *Babylonian* Ambassadors are too welcome to *Ezekiah*; As a man transported with the honor of their respective, and costly visitations,

tations, he forgets his teares, and his turning to the wall; he forgets their incompatible Idolatry; so hugging them in his bosome, as if there had beeene no cause of strangenesse: All his doores fly open to them; and in a vainglorious ostentation all his new-gathered treasures, all his strong armoryes entertaine their eyes; nothing in his house, nothing in his Dominion is hid from them.

Oh *Ezekiah*, what meanes this impotent ambition? It is not long since thou tarest off the very plates of the Temple doores, to giue vnto *Senacherib*; and can thy treasures be suddenly so multiplied, that they can be worthy to astonish forraine beholders? Or, if thy store-house were as rich as

the

the earth, can thy heart be so vain
as to be lifted vp with these hea-
vie metals? Didst thou not see
that heauen it selfe was at thy
becke, whilest thou wert hum-
bled? and shall a little earthie
drosse haue power ouer thy soul?
Can the flattering applause of
strangers let thee loose into a
proud ioy, whom the late mes-
sage of Gods Prophet resolued
into teares? Oh God, if thou do
not keepe vs, as well in our sum-
shine, as in our storne, wee are
sure to perish. As in all time of
our tribulation, so in all time of
our wealth, good Lord deliuere
vs.

Alas, how slight doth this
weaknesse seeme in our eyes, to
rejoyce in the abundance of Gods

R. blef-

blesſings to call in forraine frieds
to be wiſeſſes of our plenſty? to
raife our conceits, ſome little, vpon
the acclamations of others,
vpon the value of our owne abi-
lities? Lay thine hand vpon thy
mouth, o fooliſh fleſh and blood
wher thou feſt the cencure of
thy Maſter. If moriſe voi buoia
be Iſaiah the Prophet is ſent ſpe-
cilly to Hezekiah, with a ſharpe
and heart-breaking message. Be-
hold the daies come that all that is in
thine houſe, and that which thy father
haue laid vpon ſtone into this day,
ſhall be carried into Babylon; nothing
ſhall be left, ſaith the Lord. And of
thy ſonnes that ſhall iſſue from thee,
which thou ſhalt beget, ſhall they take
away, and they ſhall bee Enimches in
the

the Palace of the King of Babylon.

No siane can bee light in *Hezekiah*: the holiness of the person addes to the vnholiness of the act; Eminency of profession doubles both the offence and the judgement. This glory shall end, in an ignominious losse.

The great and holy God will not digest pride in any, much less in his owyne. That which was the subiect of *Hezekiah's* sin, shall be the matter of his punishment; those with whom he abode, shall be his auengers. It was his treasure and maner wherin he prides himselfe to these men of Babylon: The men of Babylon shall carry away his treasure and maner. What now doth *Hezekiah* but tempt them with a glo-

rious booty; as some fond traue-
ler that would show his gold to
a Thief?

These worldly things are fur-
theft off from the heart; Perhaps
Ezekiah might not bee much
troubled with their losse: Loe,
God comes closer to him, yet

As yet was *Ezekiah* childlesse;
how much better had it been to
continue so still, then to bee pla-
gued in his issue? He shall now
beget children to seruitude; his
joynes shall yeeld Pages to the
Court of Babylon: Whiles he sees
them borne Princes, he shal for-
see them made Eunuches in a for-
raigne Palace. What comfort can
he take in the wishes and hopes
of Iohnes, when ere they bee
borne, hee heares them deffind

to captiuitie and bondage?

This rod was smart, yet good
Ezekiah kisstes it; his heart strucke
him no lesse, then the mouth of
the Prophet; meekly therefore
doth he yeeld to this diuine cor-
rection; *Good is the Word of the
Lord which thou hast spoken.* Thou
haft spoken this word, but from
the Lord; it is not thine, but his;
and being his, it must needs bee,
like himselfe, good: Good be-
cause it is iust, for I haue deserued
more, and worse; Good, because
mercifull; for I suffer not accor-
ding to my deserts. *Is it not good,
if cbere be peace and truth in my daies?*
I haue deserued a present paymēt,
O God thou deferrest it; I haue
deserued it in person, thou refer-
uest it for those whom I cannot

R 3 yet

yet so feele, because they are not; I haue deserued war & tumult, thou fauorest me with peace, I haue deserued to be ouer-run with superstition, and Idolatry, thou blessest me with truth; shouldst thou continue truth vnto me, (though vpon the most vnquiet termes) the blessing wete too good for me; but now thou hast promised, and wilt not reverse it, that both truth and peace shall bee in my dayes; Lord I adore thy iustice, I blesse thy mercy.

Gods children are neither was-
pish nor fullen whē they are chid
or beaten, but patiently hold their
backes to the stripes of a displea-
sed mercy; knowing how much
more God is to be magnified, for
what he might haue done, then

re-

repined at, for what hee hath
done; resigning themselues
over into the hand of that gra-
cious iustice, which in their
smart seekes their refor-
mation and
glory.



R₄ MANASSEH

MANASSEH.

2 King. 21.
And
2 Chor. 33.



To last, some three yeares after his recouery, *Hezekiah* hath a sonne; but such a one, as if he could haue foreseen, orbity had beene a blessing.

Still in the throne of *Iudah* there is a succession, and interchange of good and euill: Good *Iotham* is succeeded by wicked *Ahaz*; wicked *Ahaz* is succeed by good *Ezekiah*; Good *Ezekiah* is succeeded by wicked *Manasseh*: Euill Princes succeed to good, for the exercise

exercise of the Church: and good
succeed to euill, for the comfort
of the Church.

The young yeares of *Manasseh*
giue aduantage to his mis-carriage;
Euen,whiles he might haue been
vnder the Ferule, hee swayed the
Scepter: Whither may not a child
be drawne, especially to a garish,
and puppet-like superstition? As
infancy is capable of all impressi-
ons, so most of the worst.

Neither did *Manasseh* beginne
more earely the he held out long;
He raigned more yeares then his
good father liu'd: notwithstanding
the miraculous addition to
his age; More then euer any King
of *Judah*, besides, could reach:
Length of daies is no true rule of
Gods fauour; As plants last lon-
ger

ger then sensitiu creatures, and
brute creatures out-lieue the reasona-
ble; so, amongst the reasona-
ble, it is no newes for the wic-
kedly great, to inherit these earth-
ly glories, longen then the best.

There wants not apparent
reason for this difference; Good
Princes are fetcht away to a bet-
ter Crowne; They cannot bee
losers, that exchange a weake
and fading honor, for a perfecti-
on and eternity of blessednesse:
Wicked men liue long to their
owne disaduantage; they do but
cary so many more brands to
their hell: If therefore there bee a
just man that perisheth in his
righteousnesse; and there bee a
wicked man that prolongs his
life in his wickednesse, farre be it
from

from vs; either to pity the remo-
uall of the iust, or to enuie the
continuance of the wicked; This
continues to his losse, that departs
to an happy aduancement.

It is very like that *Ezekiah* mar-
rying so late, in the vigour both
of his age, and holinesse, made a
carefull choyce of a wife suitable
to his owne piety; Neither had
his delight beeene so much in her
(according to her name) if her
delight had not beeene, as his, in
God; Their issue warues from
both, so fully inheriting the vices
of his grandfather *Ahaz*, as if there
had beeene no intermission of an
Ezekiah. So wee haue seene the
kernell of a well fruited plant de-
generate into that crab, or wil-
low, which gaue the originall to

his stocke ; yet can I not say that *Ezekiah* was as free from traducing euill to his sonne *Manasseb*, as *Ahaz* was free from traducing good to his sonne *Hezekiah* : Euill is incorporated into the best nature, whereas euen the least good descends from aboue.

We may not measure grace by meanes : Was it poffible that *Manasseb* hauing beene trained vp in the religious Court of his father *Hezekiah*, vnder the eye of so holy Prophets and Priests, vnder the shadow of the Temple of God, after a childhood seasoned with so gracious precepts, with so frequent exercise of deuotio, should run thus wild into all heathenish abominations; as if there had bin nothing but Idolatry in the seed
of

of his conception, in the milke of his nourishment, in the rules of his institution, in the practice of his examples? How vaine are all outward helpes without the influence of Gods Spirit? and that spirit breathes where he listeth: good educatiō raiseth great hopes, but the proofe of them is in the diuine benediction.

I feare to looke at the out-rages of this wicked sonne of *Ezekiah*: What hauocke doth hee make in the Church of God? as if hee had beeene borne to ruine Religion, as if his onely felicity had beeene to vntwist, or teare, in one day, that holy web which his father had beeene weauing nine and twenty years? and contrarily, to set vp in one houre that offensiuē pyle,
which

which had beeene aboue three hundred yeares in pulling downe so long had the high places stood; the zeale of *Ezekiah* in demolishing them honored him, aboue all his predecessors; and now the first act of this greene head was their redifying: That mischiefe may be done in a day, which many ages cannot redresse.

Fearefull were the presages of these bold beginnings; From the misbuilding of these chappels of the Hills to the true God, *Mosias* proctred no erecting of altars to a false: belye to *Baal*, the God of *Abrah*, the stale Idol of the heathen; yet farther, not content with so fewe Deities, he yworships all the hoste of heaven; and, that hee might despight such God yet more,

more, he sets vp altas to these abu-
sed riuals of their Maker, in the
very house of the Lord; that holy
place doth hee not feare to defile
with the graven Image of the
groue, that he had made. **N**euer
Amorite did so wickedly as Ma-
nasseh; and, which was yerworste,
it sufficed not to be thus wicked
himselfe; but hee seduced Gods
people to these abominationes;
and that his example mighte loue
the more, he spares not his owne
sonnes from the fire of the idol sa-
crifices. **N**either over this wit-
cheries lesse enormities, then his
Idolatry; hee obserued him selfe
used incantments, he dealeth with
familiar spirits, & with wizards.
Neither were either of these
worse then his crudty; **M**oseth
inno-

innocent blood till hee had filled
Ierusalem from one end to anio-
ther.

O Manasseh, how no lesse cruell
wert thou to thine owne soule,
the to thy Judah: What an hideous
list of monstrous impiety is here;
Any one of which were enough
to draw iudgment vpon a world;
but what hell is sufficient for all
together?

What brouyes are not now lif-
ted vp to an attenteue expectation
of some present, and feareful ven-
geance from God, vpon such fla-
gitious wickednesse? Therefore
thus saith the Lord, Behold I am
bringing such euill vpon Ierusalem, &
Judah, that whosoever beareth of it,
both his eares shall tingle; The per-
son of Manasseh is not capable of

reuenge enough ; as his sin dilated it selfe by an infectious diffusion to his people, so shall the punishment ! Wee are sensible of the least touch of our owne miseries, how rarely are wee affected with other mens calamities : yet this euill shall be such, as that the rumor of it shall beat no eare that shall not glow with an astonis-
hing commiseration : What the
God, what shall that plague be,
which thou threatnest with so
much preface of horrour ? I will
stretch ouer Jerusalem the line of Sa-
maria, and the plummet of the house of
Abab, and I will wipe Jerusalem as a
man wipeth a dish, delping it and tur-
ning it upside downe : And I will for-
sake the remnant of mine inheritance ;
and I will deliver them into the hand

of their enemies, and they shall become
a prey and a spoile vnto all their ene-
mies.

It is enough ô God , it is e-
nough : What eare can but tingle? what eye can but weepe?
what haire can but start vp? what
heart can bee but confouled at
the mention of so dreadfull a re-
uenge ? Can there bee a worse
iudgement then desolation, cap-
tivity,desertion,spoyle, and tor-
ture of preuailing enemies ? but
howeuer, other Cities and nati-
ons haue vndergone these disas-
ters, without wonder, that all
this should befall to thy *Jerusalem*,
the place which thou haft chosen
to thy selfe, out of the whole
earth, the lot of thine inheritance,
the seat of thine abode; whereof
thou

thou hast said, *Here shall bee my rest for ever,* it is able to amaze all eyes, all cares.

No City could fare worse then Samaria, whose inhabitants after a wofull siege, were driuen, like cattle, into a wretched seritude; Jerusalem shall fare no better from Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon; *Jerusalem,* the glory of the earth, the dearling of heaven, See, o ye vaine men, that boast of the priuiledges of Chaires, and Chaires, see, and tremble. There is no place vnder heauen to which the presence of God is so wedded as that the sins thereof shall not procure a disdainfull, & finall divorce. The height of former fauors shall be but an aggrauation of vengeance.

This totall vastation of *Ierusalem*, shall take time: onwards; God begins with the person of wicked *Mansell*; against whom he stires vp the Captaines of the hoste of the late friend, and holdeth him of *Zidah*: Those shaines amongst which hee had shrouded his guilty head, cannot shelter him from their violence; they take him, and bind him with fettors of iron; and carry him to *Babylon*. There hee lyes heladed with chaines, in an vncomfortable dungeon, exercized with variis sortes of tortures, fed with such scornefull pittance of bread, and draps of water, as might maintaine an unwilling life, to the punishment of the owner. What eye can now pity the deepest miseries of

Manasseh? What but bondage can befit him, that hath so lawlesly abused his liberty? What but an vtter abdication can befit him that hath cast off his God, and doted vpon Deuils? What but a dying life, and a tormenting death can bee fit for a man of blood?

Who now wold not haue giue this man for lost; and haue lookt when hell should claime her owne? But oh the height, oh the depth of diuine mercy! After all these prodigies of sin, *Manasseh* is a conuert; *When he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God*; and bumbled himselfe greatly before the God of his fathers. How true is that word of the Prophet, *Vexation gives understanding*; The vipers

when he is lashed, castes vp his
poyson : The traitor when hee
is racked, tells that truth which
he had else neuer vttered ; If the
crosse beare vs not to heauen,
nothing can : What vse were
there of the graine , but for the
edge of the sickle , wherewith it
is cut downe ; the stroke of the
hayle, wherewith it is beaten; the
weight and attrition of the mill,
wherewith it is crushed; the fire
of the ouen wherewith it is ba-
ken ? Say now, *Manasseh*, with
that grandfather of thine (who
was till now, too good for thee)
It is good for mee that I was af-
flicted : Euen thine yron was
more precious to thee, then thy
gold; thy Gaole was a more hap-
py lodging to thee , then thy pa-
lace;

lace; Babylon was a better Schoole to thee, the *Ierusalem*: what fooles are wee to frown vpon our afflictions? These, how crabbed soever, are our best friends. They are not, indeed, for our pleasure, they are for our profit: their issue makes them worthy of a welcome. What doe wee care how bitter that potion bee which brings health?

How farre a man may goe, and yet turne? Could there bee fouler sinnes then these? Lo, here was Idolatrie in the height, violation of Gods house, sorceries of all kinds, bloodie crueltie to his owne flesh, to the Saints of God, and all these against the stremes of a religious institution, of the zealous counsels of Gods Pro-

phets, of the checks of his owne
heart.

Who can complaine that the
way of heauen is blocked vp a-
gainst him, when hee sees such a
sinfull enter? Say the worst a-
gainst thy selfe, o thou clamorous
foule; Here is one that murder-
ed men, defied God, worshipt
Diables; and yet finds the way to
repentance; if thou bee worse
then he, deny (if thou canst) that
to thy selfe, which God hath not
denied to thee, capacitie of grace.
In the meane time, know that it
is not thy sinne, but thine impe-
nitence that barres heauen against
thee.

Presume not yet, o man, who-
soever thou art, of the libertie of
thy conuersion; as if thou coul-
dest

dest run on lawlesly in a course
of sinning, till thou come to the
brim of hell ; and then couldst
suddenly stop, and returne at lea-
sure : the mercy of God did ne-
ver set period to a wilfull sinner ;
neither yet did his owne corrupt
desires, so as when he is gone the
furthest, he could yet stay himselfe
from another step : No man that
truly repents is refused : but ma-
ny a one sins so long, that he can-
not repent. His custome of wi-
ckedness hath obdur'd his hart, &
made it flint to all good impres-
sions. There were *Ieroboams*, and
Abijams, and *Ahab*s, and *Ioashes*,
& *Abazes*, in these sacred thrones,
there was but one *Manasseh*: God
hath not left in any mans hart the
reines of his owne hart, to pace, &
turne

turne, and stop as hee lists ; This priuiledge is referued to him that made it ; *It is not of him that wils, nor of him that runs, but of God that shewes mercy :* and that mercy neglected, justly binds ouer to iudgement.

I wonder not at *Manasseh*, either sinning, or repenting, I wonder at thy goodnessse, ô Lord; who after thy iust permission of his sinne, calleſt him thus graciously to repent, and so graciously receiuest him repenting : So as *Manasseh* was not a more loathſome and monſtrous ſpectacle of wickedneſſe, then he is now a pleafing and vſefull patterne of conuerſion ; Who can now deſpair of thy mercie, ô God, that ſeeſt the teares of a *Manasseh* accepted? whē
wee

wee haue debauched our wort,
our euill cannot match with thy
goodnesse ; rather it is the prasse
of thine infinite store, that where
sinne abounds , grace abounds
much more ; O keepe vs from a
presumption of grace , that wee
may repent ; and raise vs from a
distrust of grace when wee haue
repented.

No sooner is *Manasseb* peni-
tent, then he is free ; his prayers
haue at once loosed him from his
finnes , and from his chaines ;
and of a captiue haue made him a
King ; and from the dungeon of
Babylon haue restored him to the
palace of *Ierusalem* : How easie is
it for the same hand that wounds
to cure : What cannot fervent
prayers doe, eyther for our rescu-
ing

ing from euill, or for our inuesting with good? WHICH HAD TWO
Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God. Then? and not before? Could his yonger eares escape the knowledge of Gods miraculous deliuerance of *Ierusalem* from the *Affyrians*? Could hee but know the slaughter that Gods Angell made in one night, of an hundred fourescore and fiuе thousand? Could he but haue heard the iust reuenge vpon *Senacherib*? Could he be ignorant of his fathers supernaturall recoverie? Could hee but see that euer-lasting monument of the noted degrees in the Dyall of *Ahaz*? Could he auoid the sense of those fifteeene yeares, which were super-added to his fathers age? What one of these proofes

proofes doth not euince a Deity?
Yet, till his owne smart, and
cure, *Manasseh* knew not that the
Lord was God.

Foolish sinners pay deare for
their knowledge; neither will in-
dure to be taught good-cheape:
so we haue seene resty horses that
will not moue till they bleed
with the spur: So we haue seene
dull and carelesse children, that
will learne nothing but what is
put into them with the rod.

The Almighty wil be sure to be
knowyne for what he is: if not by
faite meanes, yet by foule; If our
prosperity, and peace, and sweet
experience of his mercy can win
vs to acknowledge him, it is
more for our ease, but, if we will
needes bee taught by stripes, it is

answ

no

no lesse for his glory.

Manasseh now returnes another man to Ierusalem: With what indignation doth hee looke vpon his old follies ? and now, all the amends he can make, is to vndoe what he did ; to doe that which hee vndid : *Hee tooke away the strange Gods, and the Idoll out of the house of the Lord, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the Lord, and in Ierusalem, and cast them out of the City.* True repentance beginnes to decline at the ablative ; destroying those monuments of shame which former errour had reared ; The thornes must first be stubbed vp, ere the ground can be capable of seed. The true method of grace, is, first, *Cease to doe euill;* then,

on

Learne

Learne to doe good.

In vaine had *Manasseh* professed a repentance, if the strange gods had still held possession of *Ierusalem*, if the Idol had still harboured in Gods Temple, if foraigne altars had still smoked vp on the holy mountaine; Away with all this trash , when once *Manasseh* comes to a true sense of piety.

There is nothing but hypocrisie in that penitent , who after all vowes, and teares, retaines his old abominations ; It is that poore peece of satisfactiō which we can giue to the diuine iustice, in an hearty indignation, to fling downe that cup of wickednesse wherewith wee haue beeene bewitched, and to trample vpon the sheards:

shreads: without which, confession is but winde, and the drops of contrition, water.

The living God loues to dwelle clearie; hee will not come vnder the roofe of Idols, nor admit Idols to come vnder his: First therefore, Manasseh casts out the strange Gods and Idols, and altars; and then, *He repaires the Altar of the Lord, and sacrifices thereon peace-offerings, and thanke-offerings.* Not till he had pull'd down, might he build; and when hee had pull'd downe, hee must build. True repentance is no lesse acte of good: What is it, the better, if when the Idolatrous altars are defaced, the true God hath not an Altar erected to his Name? In many Altars was superstition,

in

in no altars, Atheisme.

Neither doth penitent *Manasseh* build God a new Altar, but hee repaires the old , which by long dis-use lay waft, and was mossie & mouldred with age & neglect.

God loues well his owne institutions; neither can he abide innouations, so much as in the out-sides of his seruices. It is an happy worke to vindicate any ordinance of God from the iniurie of times, and to restore it to the originall glory.

What haue our pious gouernors done other in religion ? had wee gone about to lay a new foundation, the worke had been accursed ; now wee haue onely scraped off some superfluous mossie, that was growne vpon

T

these

these holy stones, we haue cemen-
ted some broken peeces, we haue
pointed some crazie corners with
wholsome morter, in stead of
base clay, wherewith it was dis-
gracefully patched vp. The altar
is old, it is Gods altar. It is not
new, not ours. If we haue layd
one new stone in this sacred buil-
ding, let it flye in our faces, and
beat out our eyes.

On this repaired altar doth Ma-
~~nasseb~~ send vp the sacrifices of his
peace, of his thankfulness; and
doubtlesse the God of heauen
smels a fuycer saiuour of rest; No
perfume is so pleasing to God, as
that which is cast in by a penitent
hand.

It had not serued the turne that
Manasseb had approched alone to
this

this renued altar; As his leud example had withdrawn the people from their God; so now he commands *Iudah* to serue the Lord God of *Israel*; Had he been silent, he could not haue been vnsfollowed: Euery act of greatnessse is preceptiue; but now that religion is made Law, what *Israelite* will not be devout?

The true God hath now no competitor in *Iudah*; All the Idolls are pull'd downe, the high places will not be pull'd downe; An ill guise is easilie taken vp, it is not so easily left: After a common depravation of religion, it is hard to returne vnto the first purity: as when a garmet is deeply soiled, it cannot without many lauers recouer the former cleanliness.



Losiah's Reformation.

2 King. 22.
And 23.



Et, if wee must alter from our selves, it is better to bee a *Manasseh*, then a *Ioash*: *Ioash* beganne well, and ended ill: *Manasseh* began ill, and ended well; his age varied from his youth, no lesse, then one mans condition can varie from another; His posterity succeeded in both; *Amnon* his sonne succeeded in the sinnes of *Manassehs* youth; *Iosiah* his grandchild succeeded in the vertues of his age. What a vast difference doth grace make in the same age? *Manasseh* began his reigne at twelve yeares;

yeares; *Iosiah* at eight; *Manasseh* was religiouly bred vnder *Hezekiah*; *Iosiah* was mis-nurtured vnder *Amnon*; and yet *Manasseh* runs into absurd Idolatries, *Iosiah* is holiie and deuout. The Spirit of God breathes freely; not confining it selfe to times, or meanes.

No rules can bind the hands of the Almighty; It is in ordinarie proofe too true a word, that was said of old, *Woe be to thee, O Land, whose King is a child*: the goodnessse of God makes his owne exceptions; *Iudah* neuer fared better, then in the green years of a *Iosiah*: If wee may not rather measure youth, and age by government, and disposition, then by yeares: Surely thus, *Iosiah* was older with smooth cheeke, then

Manasseh with gray haireſ. Happy is the infancie of Princes, when it falls into the hands of faithfull Counſellors.

A good patterne is no ſmall helpe for young beginnets; *Iofiah* ſets his father *David* before him, not *Amnon*, not *Manafeh*: Examples are the beſt rules for the inexperienced; where their choice is good, the direCTIONS are eaſieſt: The lawes of God are the wayes of *David*; Those lawes were the rule, theſe wayes were the practice; Good *Iofiah* walkes in all the wayes of his Father *David*.

Euen the minority of *Iofiah* was not idle; we cannot be good too early: At eight yeares it was enough to haue his eare open to heare good counſaile; to haue his

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eies & hart opē to seek after God: At twelue, he begins to act: and shewes well that hee hath found the God he sought: Then he addresses himselfe to purge *Iudah*, and *Jerusalem*, from the high places, groues, images, altars, where-with it was defiled; burning the bones of the idolatrous Priests vpon their altars; strawing the ashes of the idols vpon the graues of them that had sacrificed to them, striuing by those fires, and mattocks to testifie his zealous detestation of all idolatry.

The house must first be cle-
ned, ere it can bee garnished; no man will cast away his cost vpon
uncleane heaps; so soone as the
Temple was purged, *Iosiah* bends
his thoughts vpon the repaying;

T 4 and

² Chro. 34.
³.

and beautifying of this house of the Lord.

What stir was there in *Judah*, wherein Gods Temple suffered not ? Sixe seuerall times was it pillaged, whether out of force, or will : First, *Iehoash* King of *Judah* is faine by the spoile of it to stop the mouth of *Hazaell*; Then, *loash* King of *Israel* fils his owne hands with that sacred spoile, in the dayes of *Amaziah*; after this, *Abaz* rifles it for *Tiglath Pileser*, King of *Affyria*; then *Hezekiah* is forced to ransaeke the treasures of it for *Senacherib*; yet after, the sacrilege of *Manasseh* makes that booty of it, which his latter times indeuoured to restore; and now lastly, *Ammon* his sonne neglects the frame, embeazzels the furniture

ture of this hōly place: The very
pile began to complaine of age
and vnrespect: Now comes good
Iosiah, and in his eighteenth yeare
(when other young Gallants
would haue thought of nothing
but pleasure, and iollity) takes vp
the latest care of his father *David*,
and giues order for the repayring
of the Temple.

The keepers of the doore haue
receiuied the contribution of all
faithfull Iewes, for this pious vse;
the King sends *Shaphan* the scribe
to *Hilkijah* the Priest to summe it
vp, and to deliuier it vnto Car-
penters, and Masons, for so hōly
a worke.

How well doth it beseeme the
care of a religious Prince, to set
the Priests and Scribes in hand
with

with reedifying the Temple? The command is the Kings, the charge is the high-Priests, the execution is the workmens; when the laborers are faithfull in doing the worke, and the high Priest in directing it, and the King in injoining it, Gods House cannot fail of an happy perfection; but when any of these slackens, the businesse must needs languish.

How God blesseth the deuout indeuours of his seruants? Whiles *Hilkijah* was diligently suruaying the breaches and the reparation of the Temple, hee lights vpon the booke of the Law: The authenticke and originall Booke of Gods Law was by a speciall charge appointed to be carefully kept within a safe shrine, in the Sanctu-

Sanctuary: In the depraved times
of idolatry, some faithfull Priest
(to make sure worke) had locked
it fast vp, in some secret corner of
the Temple, from the reach of all
hands, of all eyes: as knowing
how impossible it was, that di-
vine monument could otherwise
escape the fury of prophane gail-
tiness: Some few transcripts
there were doubtlesse, (parcels of
this sacred Book,) in other hands;
neither doubt I, but as *Hilkijah*
had been formerly well acquain-
ted with this holy volume (now
of long time hid) so the eares of
good *Iosiah* had beene inured to
some passages thereof; but the
whole body of these awfull Re-
cords, since the late night of Id-
latrous confusion, and persecu-
tion

tion saw no light, till now; This precious treasure doth *Hilkijah* find, whiles he digs for the Temple: Neuer man laboured to the reparation of Gods Church, but he met with a blessing more thē he looked for.

Hilkijah the Priest, and *Shaphan* the scribe do not ingrosse this invaluable wealth into their owne hands, nor suppress these more then sacred roles, for their owne aduantage; but trans-mit them, first to the eares of the King, then by him, to the poeple: It is not the praise of a good scribe, to lay vp, but to bring forth, both old and new: And if the Priests lips shall keepe knowledge, they keep it to impart, not to smother: *The people shall seeke the Law at his mouth;*

mouth; for hee is the messenger of the
Lord of Hosts.

So soone as the good King
heares the words of the booke of
the Law, and in speciall, those
dreadfull threats of iudgement,
denounced against the Idolatries
of his *Judah*, he rends his clothes,
to shew his heart rent with sor-
row, and fearfull expectation of
those plagues, and washes his bo-
osome with teares. Oh gracious
tendernesse of *Iosiah*: he doth but
once heare the Law read, and is
thus humbled; humbled for his
fathers sins, for the sins of his peo-
ple: how many of vs, after a
thousand hammerings of the me-
naces of Gods Law, vpon our
guilty soules, continue yet insensi-
ble of our danger? The very rea-
ding

ding of this Law doth thus affect him ; the preaching of it stirs not vs ; The sinnes of others struke thus deepe with him ; our owne are sleighted by vs : A soft hatt is the best tempered for God : So Physicians are wont to like those bodies best, which are easiest to worke vpon ; O God make our clay waxe, and our waxe pliable to thine hand ; so shall we be sure to be free either from sin, or from the hurt of sin.

It is no holy sorrow that sends vs not to God ; *Iosiah* is not moaned with a distractiue grieve, or an astonishing feare, but in the height of his passion, sends five choice messengers to *Huldah* the Prophetesse, to enquire of the Lord, for himselfe, for *Iudah* : It is
gnib an

an happie trouble that drives vs
to this refuge. I doe not heare any
of these Courtiers reply to this
godly motion of their young
King : Alas, Sir, what meaneſt
this deepe perplexity? What needs
all this busie inquifition? If your
father were idolatrous, what is
that to you, who haue abando-
ned his ſinnes? If your people
were once idolatrous, what is
that to you, yea to them, who
haue expiated theſe crimes by
their repentaunce? Haue you not
carefully reformed all thofe abu-
fes? hath not your happy refor-
matiō made an abūdant amends
for thofe wrongs? Spare your
teares, and ſave the labor of your
mefengers; All is well, all ſhall
be well; theſe iudgements are for
the

the obstinate; had we beeene still guilty, these feares had been iust: were wee still in danger, what had we gained by our conuersiōn? Rather, as glad to second the religious cares of their young King, they feed his holy anxieties with a iust aggrauation of perill; and by their good counsell, whet these his zealous desires of a speedy resolution: That state cannot but be happy, whose Priests and Peeres are ready as to suggest, so to cherish, and execute the deuout projects of their Soueraignes.

The graue Priest, the learned scribe, the honourable Courtiers doe not disdaine to knocke at the doore of a Prophetesse: Neither doth any of them say, It were hard if wee should not haue as much

ac.

acquaintance with God, as a woman; but in an humble acknowledgement of her Graces, they come to learne the will of God, from her mouth: True piety is modest, and stands not vpon termes of reputation, in the busynesses of God; but willingly honours His gifts in any subiect; least of all in it selfe.

The sexe is not more noted in *Hildah*, then the condition: As she was a woman, so a wife, the wife of *Shallum*: Holy matrimony was no hindrance to her divine revelations; she was at once a Prophetesse in her collodg, than his wife in her family; It was never the practice of God to confide his graces to virginie: At this very time the famous Pro-

V phet

phet *Ieremy* flourished, some years had he already spent in this publicke seruice; why was not he rather consulted by *Iosiah*? It is not vnlike that some propheticall imployments called him away, at this time from *Ierusalem*: His presence could not haue beene balked: purposelly, doubtlesse doth God cast this message vpon the point of that absence, that hee might honor the weaker vessell with his diuine oracle; and exercise the humility of so great clients: In the answers of God, it is not to be regarded, who speakes, but from whom: The iniury redounds to God, if the weaknesses of the person cause vs to undervalue the authority of the function.

As *Iosiah* and his messengers do not despise *Huldah*, because shee was a woman; so *Huldah* doth not flatter *Iosiah*, because a King: Go tell sheman that sent you, *Thus saith the Lord*: Behold I will bring euill vpon this place. Loe, hee that was as God to his stibjects, is but as a man to the Prophetesse: neither is the message easier che swifter, because it is required by a Prince: No circumstance may vary the forme of divine truth. Euill must befall *Jerusalem* and *Huldah*, yea, all the words of that booke, must alight vpon the inhabitants of both: In how bad a case we may bee, and yet thinke our selues not safe onely but happy? These Jewes had forgotten their old schools, and now ha-
dabul uing

ving framed themselves to ho-
ly courses, promised them-
selves nothing but peace; when
the Propheteesse foresees, and fore-
tells their approaching ruine. Even
their old score must be paid, after
the opinion of a clear agreement
Intvaine shall wee hope to quit
our arreages by prorogation.
This Propheteesse had immediate
visions from God, yet shee
must speake out of the Booke;
There was never any revelation
from the Lord, that crossed his
writings: of his hand, and his
tongue agree eternally: If that
booke had cursed Iudah, she may
not absolve us, god your owne s-
-qe. Yet, what a gracious mixture
was here of mercy, with severity,
severity to Iudah, mercy to Iosiah,
Iosiah

Judah shall be plagued, and shall become a desolation, and a curse; Iosiah shall bee quietly housed in his graue, before this storne fall upon Judah: His eyethall not see, what his people shall feele: it is enough that the expectation of these euills afflicts him, the sense shall not: so abowe earth off.

Whence is this indulgence? Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast bumbled thy selfe before the Lord. How happy a thing it is to bee a reed vnto Gods iudgements, rather then an oake, the meke and gentle reed stoops and therefore stands, the oake stands stiffly out against the strongest gust, and therefore is turned vp by the roots: At least, let vs dailement those sins wee haue not.

V 3 uoided

luyded; and mourne for the sins
of others, whiles wee hate our
owne. *and yb[is]m[od] hisit d[omi]n[u]m*
He that found himselfe exempted
from this vengeance, by his
repentance and deepe humiliatiō,
would faine find the same way
for the deliuerance of his people:
The same words of the Law
therefore, that had wrought vpon
his heart, are by him caused to be
publikely read in the eates of *Iudeah*, and *Ierusalem*; The assembly
is vniuersall, of Priests, Prophets,
people, both small and great; be-
cause the sin was such, the danger
was such: that no man may com-
plaine to want information, the
Law of God souds in every eare.
If our eare be shut to the Law, the
sin is ours; but if the Law be shut
babion. ε V to

to our ears, the sin is of our governors : Woe be to them that hide Gods booke from the people, as they would doe rats-bane from the eye of children : Ignorant soules cannot perish without their murder : There is no feare of knowing too much , there is too much feare of practizing too little : Now, if the people doe not imitate their King in rebelling, they are not worthy to partake with him in his impunitie. Howsoeuer, they shall not want a great example; as of sorrow, so of amendment. Good *Iosiah* stands by the pillar, and solemnly renewes his Couenant with his God; the people cannot for shame refuse to second him : Euen they that lookt for a de-

V 4 struction,

struction, yet doe not withdraw
their obedience; Gods Children
may not be sullen vnder his cor-
rections, but whether they expect
or feele smart, are no other then
dutifull to his awfull hand. As
a man that findes hee hath done
something that might indanger
the forfait of his fauour, puts him-
selfe into some deseruing action,
whereby hee may hope to re-in-
deare himselfe, so doth *Iosiah* here;
No indeauor is enough to testifie
his zeale to that name of God
which was so profaned by his
peoples Idolatry; What euer mo-
numents were yet remaining of
wicked Paganisme, hec defaces
with indignation; hee burnes the
vessels of *Baal*, and puts downe
his *Chemarim*, destroyes the houses
notiswif

of

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of the Sodomites, strawes the pow-
der of their idols in the brooke
Kedron, defiles *Topheth*, takes a-
way the horses, of the Sun, burns
the charets of the Sun with fire,
and omits nothing that might re-
concile God, cleare *Judah*, perfitt a
reformation.

Neither is this care confined
to *Ierusalem*, and the neighboring
Townes, but stretches it selfe to
the vtmost coasts of *Iosiah's King-
dom*. *Bethel* was the infamous
seat of the pollution of *Israel*; it
seemes the heires of *Ieroboam*
(who set vp his golde calfe there)
injoyed it not long; the Kings of
Judah recovered it to their crown,
but, it had not yet recovered it
selfe from that ancient infection:
Thither doth good *Iosiah* send the
good

vnhallowed ashes of Baals Reliques, to staine that altar first, which hee will soone after deface.

The time was, and it was no lesse then three hundred and fiftie yeares since, that the man of God, out of Iudah, cried against Ierobams altar;

2 Kin.13.2

O Altar, Altar; Thus saith the Lord; Behold a Child shall be borne, vnto the House of Dauid, Iosiah by name, and vpon thee shall he offer the Priests of the high-places, that burne incense vpon thee, and mens bones shall be burnt vpon thee.

And now is the houre come, wherein euerie of those words shall bee accomplished: It could not but bee a great confirmation to Iosiah, to see that God had so long

long agoe fore-markt him for his owne; and fore-nam'd him to so zealous a seruice.

All our names are equally fore-known of that divine prouidence, though not fore-spoken: neither can any act passe from vs, which was not pre-determined in that eternall Counsell of the Almighty: Neither can any act that is there pre-determined bee vnhappily fulfilled vpon earth: Interruption of time breakes no square in the divine decrees: Our pur-blind eies see nothing, but that which toucheth their hidds; the quicke sight of Gods prescience sees that, as present, which is a world off: According to the prediction, the stench of dead mens bones is a fit perfume to send vp from this
15911 altar

altar to heaven; whose best sacrifices sauntered worse in the nostrils of God. And the blood of the idolatrous sacrificers was a meet oblation to that God, who had beene dishonoured by their burnt offerings to his base co-rivalles.

Even that Prophet whiche foretold this, had his toomb in Bethel; and that toomb had his inscription; His last weakeenesse might not rob him of the honour of his sepulture: How palpable doe these *Israelites* condemne them-selves, whiles they referue so famous a monument of their owne conviction. It was no prejudice to this holy Prophet, that his bones lay amongst the sepulchers of idolaters. His Epitaph preferreth ued

ued those bones from burning,
vpon that altar, which he had ac-
cursed; As the Lyon might not
teare his carcasse, when hee died,
so now, the furie of the multitude
may not violate his verie bones,
in the graue. Iosiahq; bns.

I doe not see Iosiah saue them
for reliques; I heare him com-
mand they shall rest in peace; it is
fit the dead bodies of Gods Saints
should be as free from contempt,
as from superstition.

After the renauall of these rites
of false worship, it is time to bring
in the true: Now a solemnne Pas-
sioner shall be kept vnto the Lord,
by the charge of Iosiah. That book
of the Lawes sees him; the time,
place, circumstantes of this sacra-
ment, his zeale so carefully fol-
lowes

lowes it, that since the dayes of
Samuel, this feast was neuer so glo-
riously, so punctually celebrated,
Ierusalem is the place, the fourteenth
day of the first moneth is the time,
the Leuites are the actors, a year-
ling and spotlesse Lambe is the
provision; no bone of it is bro-
ken, the blood is sprinkled vpon
the doore-postes, it is roasted
whole, eaten with sowre herbs,
with bread vnleavened; the re-
mainder is consumed by fire, The
law, the sacrifices, had beeue in
vaine, if the Passouer had beeue
neglected, No true Israelite might
want, whether this monument
of their deliuerance past, or this
Type of the Messiah to come
Rather then fail, syrups bountie
shall supply to Iulah Lambs for
ever, their

their paschall deuotion: No almes
is so acceptable, as that where-
by the soule is fur-
thered.

I O S I A H S



...-10. a short arrivd
**IOSIAH'S Death; with the
 desolation of the Temple,
 and Ierusalem.**

*2 King. 23.
 ver 29.*

*And
 2 Chro. 35.
 ver 20.
 2 Chro. 36.*



*Osiah hath now
 happily settled the
 affaires both of
 God, & the state:
 and now hath
 sweet leisure to injoy himselfe,
 and his people : his conscience
 doth not more cheare him at
 home, then his subiects abroad ;
 Neuer King raigned with more
 officious piety to God, with more
 loue, and applause of men : But
 what stability is there in these
 earth-*

earthly things? how seldom is excellency in any kind long-liu'd? In the very strength of his age; in the height of his strength, is *Isiah* withdrawne from the earth; As not without a mercifull intercession of his glory, on Gods behalfe, so, not without some weaknesse, on his own. *Pharaoh Necho* King of *Egypt* comes vp to fight against the King of *Affyria*: What is that to *Isiah*? Perhaps the *Egyptians* attempted to passe through the land of *Indah*, towards *Carobemish*, the seat of his war; but, as a neighbour, not as an enemy: *Isiah* resists him, as neither holding it safe to admit a forraigne power into the bosome of his Country, nor daring to give a false occasion of provoking the

Affyrian hostility against him.

The King of *Egipt* mildly deprecates this enmity, hee sends Ambassadors to *Iosiah*, saying, *What haue I to doe with thee thou King of Iudah, I come not against thee, this day, but against the house wherewith I haue warre; for God commanded me to make bast; forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that bee destroy thee not.*

What friend could haue sayd more? what Prophet could haue aduised more holily? why doth not good *Iosiah* say with himselfe; There may bee truth in this suggestion; God may haue sent this man, to be a scourge of mine old enemy, of *Affur*: If the hand of the Almighty be in this designe, why doe I oppose it? The quarrell

rell is not mine, why do I thrust my finger into this flame, vnbidden? Wherefore should I hazard the effusion of blood, vpon an harmlesse passage? Can I heare him plead a command from God, and not inquire into it? How easie is it for me to know the certainty of this pretended commission? Haue not I the Priests, and Prophets of God about me? Let mee first goe and consult his oracle; If God halte sent him, and forbidden mee, why should my courage cary me against my piety?

It is strange that the good hart of *Iosiah* could escape these thoughts, these resolutions: Yet, hee that vpon the generall threats of Gods Law against *Judas*, sends messen-

gesitō inquire of a Prophetesse; now, vpon these particular thicke
of danger to himselfe, speaks not,
stirs not: The famous Prophet
Ieremīah was then living, and *Zel-*
phaniāh; besides a whole Col-
ledge of Seers, *Iosiah* doth not so
much as send out of doores, to
ask; *Sibull* *Igoe* vp against the King
of *Egypt*? Sometimes, both grace
and dōvit are asleepe in the holiest
and wariest breſts: The best of
all Gods Shiats may bee; ſome-
times miscaried by their paſſions,
or their coſtwees vpon himſelfe viii

The wise p̄eouidence of God
hath mercifully determined to
jealoy *Iosiah* to his owne counſels,
that by the weakneſſe of his ſer-
vant, hee might take occaſion to
perfite his glory! Even that where-

in *Iosiah* was wanting vnto God, shall conçurre to the making vp of Gods promise to *Iosiah*: when we are the most blind-folded, we run on the waies of Gods hidden decrees; and, what euer our intents be, cannot, if wee would, goe out of that vnknowne path.

Needs will *Iosiah* put himselfe into armes against an ynwilling enemie; and, to bee lesse noted, disguiseth himselfe. The fatall arrow of an Egyptian archer findes him out, in the throng, and giues him his deaths-wound; Now, too late hee calls to a retrait; his changed Charet is turned to a Biere; to carie his bleeding corps to his gracie, in *Ierusalem*.

Whateye doth not now pitie and lament the untimely end of

a *Iosiah*? Whom can it choose but affect, to see a religious, iust, vertuous Prince snatched away in the vigour of his age? After all our foolish moane, the prouidence that directed that shaft to his highting place, intends that wound for a stroke of mercy: The God whō *Iosiah* serues, looks through his death, at his glorie: and by this sudden violence will deliuere him from the view, and participation of the miseries of *Iudah*, which had beene many deaths; and fetches him to the participation of that happiness, which could countervale more deathes, then could be incident into a *Iosiah*. Oh the wonderfull goodness of the Almighty, whose verie iudgements are mercifull; Oh the

the safe condicion of Gods chil-
dren, whom very paine easeth,
whom death revives, whom dis-
solutio vnites, whom lastly their
verie sinne and temptation glo-
rifies.

How happily hath *Iosiah* gaine-
ned by this change? In stead of a
froward people, he now is for-
ted with Saints and Angels; in
stead of a fading, and corruptible
crownie, he now inioyes an eter-
nall. The orphane subiects are
readie to weepe out their eyes, for
sorrow; their losse cannot be so
great, as his gaine: he is glorious,
they, as their sins had deserued,
miserable. If the separated soule
could be capable of passion, could
Iosiah haue seene, after his depar-
ture, the calamities of his sons, of

his people, it could not but haue
laid siege to his peace.

The sad subjects proclaimme
his sonne *Iehoahaz*, King, in stead
of so lamented a father; He both
doth ill, and fares ill: By that time
he hath sat but three moneths in
the throne, *Pharaoh Nechoh* King
of Egypt seaōds the fathers death,
with the sonnes captiuity: This
victorius enemy puts downe
the wicked sonne of *Iosiah*, and
lades him wth chains at *Riblah*,
in the land of *Hamath*, and lades
his people wth the tribute of an
hundred talents of siluer, and a ta-
lent of gold: Yet, as if he that was
vnwilling to fight with *Iosiah*,
were no lesse vnwilling to root
out his posterity, this Egyptian
sets *Eliakim*, the second sonne of
Iosiah,

Iosiah, vpon the seat of his father; & that he might be al his changes his name to Ieboiakim: oh the woful & vnworthy successio of Iosiah; one son is a prisoner, the other is a tributary; both are wicked. After that Ieboiakim hath been some yeares Pharaohs Baylieue, to gather, and rackinge the deare rents of Iudah; Nebuchadnezzar the great King of Babylon comes vp, and sweepes away both the Lord, and his Feodary, Pharaoh, and Ieboiakim.

So farre was the ambitious Egyptian from maintaining his incroachment vpon the territories of Iudah, that he could not now hold his ovne: From Nilus to Euphrates, all is lost: So subiect are the lesser powers still to bee swallowed vp of the greater; so iust

iust it is with God , that they
which will bee affecting vndue
inlargement of their estates ,
should fall short of what they
had.

Iehoiakim is caried in fetters to
Babylon : and now in that dun-
geon of his captiuity, hath more
leasure, then grace, to bethinke
himselfe of all his abominations ;
and whiles hee inherits the sad
lodging of his great grandfather,
Manasseh, inherits not his suc-
cessor.

Whiles hee is rotting in this
Goale,his young sonne *Iehoiachin*
starts vp in his throne ; like to a
mushrom that rises vp in a night,
and withers in a day : Within
three moneths, and ten dayes, is
that young Prince (the meet son
of

of such a father) fetcht vp in irons
to his fathers prison; Neither shall
he goe alone ; his attendance shal
adde to his misery ; His mother,
his wiues, his officers, his peeres,
his craftsmen, his warrours ac-
company him , manidled, and
chained, to their perpetuall bon-
dage.

Now, according to *Isaiahs*
word, it would haue been great
preferment for the fruit of *Heze-*
kiabs loynes to bee Pages in the
Court of *Babylon*.

One only branch yet remaines
of the vnhappy stocke of holy *Io-*
siah, Mattaniah, the brother of *Ie-*
hoiakim , whom *Nebuchadnezar*
(changing his name to *Zedekiah*)
sets vp in that forlorne, and tribu-
tary throne ; There might hee
haue

haue liued (though an vnderling) yet peaceable; This man (to make vp the measure of Gods iust iudgments) as he was euer a rebell to God, so proues rebellious to his Soueraigne master, the King of Babylon: The Prophet *Ieremy* hath forewarn'd him in vain; nothing could teach this man, but smart.

Who can looke for other then fury frō *Nebuchadnezzar*, against *Jerusalem*, which now had affronted him with three seuerall successions of reuolts, and conspiracies against his gouernment; and thrice abused his bountē, and indulgence? with a mighty army doth he therfore come vp against his seditious deputy; and besieges *Jerusalem*, and blockes it vp with forts round about. After two yeares

yeares siege, the Chaldees without, and the famine within, haue preuailed; King Zedekiah and his souldiers are fled away by night, as thinking themselves happy, if they might abandon their walls, and save their liues.

The Chaldees (as caring more for the birdes, then for the nest) pursue them, and ouertake Zedekiah, forlaken of all his forces, in the plaine of Iericho, and bring him to Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. What can so vnthankfull and perfidious a vassall expect, but the worst of revenge? The sentence is fearfull: First, the sonnes of Zedekiah are slaine before his eyes; then those eyes of his (as if they had seene enough, when they had seene him childlesse)

lesse) are put out : His eyes are onely lent him so long, as to torment him with the sight of his owne vtmost discomfort; Had his sonnes but ouer-liued his eies, the griefe had beene so much the lesse, as the apprehension of it had beene lesse liuely, and piercing; Now, this wofull obiect shall shut vp his sight, that, eu'en when his bodily eyes are gone, yet the eyes of his minde might euer see what he last saw; That thus his sonnes might bee euer dying before him, and himselfe in their death euer miserable.

Who doth not now witness
the blood of *Hezekiah* and *Iosiah*
could have beeene seuered from
these impure dregs of their lewd
issue? no man could pity the of-
fenders,

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senders, were it not for the mixture of the interest of so holy progenitors.

No more sorrow can come in at the windowes of *Zedekiah*, more shall come in at his doores; his care shall receiue what more to rue for his *Jerusalem*: *Nebuzaradan* the great Marshall of the King of *Babylon* comes vp against that deplored City, and breakes downe the walls of it, round about, and burnes the Temple of the Lord, and the Kings house, and euery faire Pallace of *Jerusalem*, with fire; drives away the remainder of her inhabitants, into Captiuity, caries away the last spoiles of the glorious Temple. Oh *Jerusalem*, *Jerusalem*, the wonder of all times, the paragon of nations,

nations, the glory of the earth,
the fauourite of heauen, how art
thou now become heapes of
ashes, hilles of rubbish, a spectacle
of desolation, a monument of
ruine? If later, yet no lesse deepe
hast thou now pledged that bitter
cup of Gods vengeance, to thy
sister Samaria. How carefully had
thy God forwarned thee? Thogh
Israel play the harlot, yet, let not
Judah sinne: Loe now, as thine
iniquities, so thy iudgements haue
overtaken her! Both lye together
in the dust, both are made a curse
to all posterities: Oh God, what
place shall thy justice spare, if Ieru-
salem haue perished? If that delight
of thine were cut off for her wic-
kednesse, Let not vs bee high-
minded but feare, omis lie to vs
anoonan

What

What pity it was to see those
goodly Cedars of the Temple
flaming vp higher then they
stood in *Lebanon*? to see those cur-
ious marbles , which never fel
the dint of the pick-axe, or ham-
mer, in the laying ; wounded
with mattockes, and wounding
the earth in their fall : to see the
holie of holies, whereto none
might enter but the high-priest,
once a yeate, thronged with Pa-
gans ; the vailes rent, the sacred
Arke of God vilated, and defaced,
the Tables ouer-turned, the altars
broken down, the pillars demoli-
shed, the pauements digged vp,
yea, the very grouēd, where that fa-
mous pile stood, deformed. O
God, thou woldst rather haue no
visible house vpon earth, then in-

Y dure

dure it defiled with Idolatries.

Foure hundred thirty and sixe
yeares had that Temple stood,
and beautified the earth, and ho-
nored heauen, now it is turned
into rude heapes; There is no
prescription to be pleaded for the
fauour of the Almighty: Only
that Temple, not made with
hands, is eternall in the heauens.
Thither hee graciously bring vs,
that hath ordain'd vs thither, for
the sake of that glorious high-
Priest, that hath once for
all entred into that holy
of holies,

Amen.

Contemplations
ON THE HISTO-
RIE OF THE OLD
TESTAMENT.

The 21th. and last Booke.

Wherein are,

- 1 Zerubbabel and Ezra.
- 2 Nehemiah building the walls of Jerusalem.
- 3 Nehemiah redressing the extortion of the Jews.
- 4 Ahasuerus feasting; Vashti cast off; Esther chosen.
- 5 Haman disrespected by Mordecai; Mordecaies message to Esther.
- 6 Esther suing to Ahasuerus.
- 7 Mordecai honored by Haman.
- 8 Haman hanged; Mordecai advanced.

[Anúncios](#)

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ANSWER

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187. — *Thesaurus* 1. 26.

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Z E R U B B A B E L and
E Z R A.



HE first transpor-
tation into Baby-
lon, vnder Ieho-
kim, (wherein
Daniel, *Ezekiel*,
and many other of the best note,
were driven into captiuity,) was
(some eleuen yeares after) follow-
ed with a second, vnder Zedekiah;
wherin the remnant of the, now-
ruined, *Ierusalem*, and *Judah*, were
swept away. Seuenty yeares was
the

the period of their longest seruite, whiles *Babylō* was a Queen, *Judah* was her vassall: when that proud Tyrannesse fell, Gods people began to rise againe: The *Babylonian* Monarchie was no sooner swallowed vp of the *Persian*, then the *Iewes* felt the comfort of libertie.

For *Cyrus* conquering *Babylon*, and finding the *Iewes* groaning vnder that miserable captiuity, straight releases them, and sends them, vnder the conduct of their Captaine *Zorobabel*, backe to their almost-forgotten country.

The world stands vpon vicissitudes; Euery Nation hath her turne, and must make vp her measure: Threescore and tenne yeares agoe, it was the course of

Judah,

Iudah, the iniquity of that rebellious people was full. Some hundred and thirty yeares before that, was the turne of *Samaria*, and her *Israelites*: Now the stafte is come to the doores of *Babylon*, euen that wherewith *Iudah* was beaten: and those *Persians* which are now victorious, must haue their terme also. It is in vaine for any earthly state to promise to it selfe an immutable cōdition. At last, the rod that scourged Gods children, is cast into the fire: *Thou hast remembred, O Lord, the Children of Edom in the day of Ierusalem, how they said, Downe with it, downe with it, even to the ground: O daughter of Babylon wasted with misery, how happy is hee that rewardeth thee as thou hast serued them:* It is *Cyrus* that

Y 4 hath

hath wrought this revenge, this
rescue, modellit et usq; ad
Doubtless, it did him a little
more Cyrus to this fauour, that he
found himselfe honorably fore-
named in these Lewish prophe-
ties, and soe appointed to this
glorious seruice, no less then an
hundred and seventy yeares, be-
fore he was. Who would not be
glad to make good so noble and
happy a destiny? O God, if wee
heare that thou hast ordained vs
to life, how gladly, how careful-
lie, should we worke out our sal-
uation? if so good workes, how
should we abound?

In the fiftyeare of his Monar-
chy, doth Cyrus both make pro-
clamations, and publish them in
writing, through all his King-
dome;

dome; wherein he both professeth his zealous resolutions, and desires to build vp Gods house, in *Jerusalem*, and inioynes, and incourages all the Jewes, through his dominions, to addresse themselves to that sacred worke; and incites all his subiects to ayd them with siluer, and gold, and goods, and beasts. How gracious was the command of that wherof the very allowance was a fauour?

Was it Cyrus that did this? was it not thou? O God! in whose hands are the harts of Kings; that stirredst vp the spirit of this Persian; as if he had beeene more then a sonne of thy Church, a father? How easie is it for thee to make very Pagans protectors to thy Church, enemies, benefactors?

Not

Not with an empty grace doth
this great King dismisse the *Iewes*,
but with a royall bountie; *Hee*
brings forth the vessels of the house of
the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had
brought forth out of Ierusalem, and had
put them in the house of his gods; and
causes them to be numbred by his Treas-
urer to the hands of Shestibazzar the
Prince of Iudah, for the rose of the
Temple; no fewer then five thousand
and four hundred vessels of gold and
silver.

Certainly, this great Monarch
wanted not wit to thinke; It is a
rich booty that I find in the Tem-
ples of Babylon; by the law of
conquest it is mine; having van-
quisht their gods, I may well
challenge their spoile; how sea-
sonably doth it now fall into my
hands,

hands, vpon this victorie, to reward my souldiers, to settle my new Empire: what if this treasure came from *Jerusalem*? the propriete is now altered; the very place (according to the cōceit of *Lewes*) hath profaned it; The true God, I haue heard, is curious; neither will abide those vessels, which haue beene polluted with idolatrous vses: It shall bee enough if I loose the bonds of this miserable people: If I giue liberty, let the next giue wealth: they will think themselues happy in bare walls, in their native earth: To what purpose should I pamper their penurie with a sudden store? But the Princely hart of *Cyrus* would admit of no such base sacrilegious thoughts; Those vessels that hee finds

finds stampe with Gods marke,
he will returne to their owner;
neither his owne occasions, nor
their abuse shall be any colour of
their detention. O Cyrus, how
manie close-handed, gipple-min-
ded Christians shall once be cho-
ked in iudgement with the ex-
ample of thy iust munificence?
thou restoredst that which wee
parloine: woe bee to those hou-
ses that are stored with the spoiles
of Gods Temple: woe bee to
those fingers that are tainted with
holy treasures.

Kings can hardly doe good a-
lone; their lawes are not more
followed, then their examples:
No sooner doe the chiefe of the
fathers of *Iudah* and *Beniamin*, and
the Priests, and Leuites set their
faces

faces towards *Jerusalem* for the building of the Temple, then the liberall hands of their Pagan neighbours furnish them with gold, and siluer, and precious things. Euer *Persian* is glad to be at the charge of laying a stone, in Gods house. The same God that had giuen them these mettals, out of his cofers of the earth, giues it out of their cofers to his Temple. He that tooke away by the *Chaldees*, giues by the *Persians*: Where the Almighty intends a worke, there cannot bee any want of meanes.

Thus hartened, thus laded, doe the ioyfull families of *Judah* returne to their old home; How many thousands of them were wonne out, and lost in that sever-

ty yeares seruitude? How few of them yet suruiued , that could know the place of their birth, and habitation ; or, say, Here stood the Temple, here the Palace ? Amongst those fourty and two thousand, three hundred & three-score *Iewes*, that returned in this first expedition; there were whō the confusion of their long captivity had robbed of their pedigree ; They knew themselues *Iewes*, but could not derive their line: these were yet admitted, without difficulty ; But those of the Priestly tribe, which could not deduce their genealogy from the register, are cashiered as vn. cleane. Then, God would bee serued in a blood, now in a due succession: If we could not fetch

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the

the line of our pedigree from Christ, and his Apostles, we were not fit for the Euangelicall altars. Their calling was by nature, ours by grace; The grace of inward abilities, of outward ordination; if we cannot approue both these, we are iustly abādoned; now had the children of *Israel* taken down their Harpes from the Willowes, which grew by the waters of *Babylon*, & could, vnbidden, sing the true sōgs of their recouered *Zion*: They are newly settled in their old māsions, when vpō the first publike feast, in the *Autumne*, immediatly following their return, they flock vp to *Ierusalē*: their first care is their publike sacrifice; That school of their Captiuity, wherin they haue been long trained, hath taught

taught them to begin with God: A forced discontinuance, makes devotion more lauditory, more sweet to religious hearts; whereas in an open freedome, piety doth too often languish.

*Iesbua the Priest, and Zorobabel the Prince are fitly ioyned in the building of the Altar: neither of their hands may be out of that sacred worke: no sooner is that set vpon the bases, then it is imployed to the daily burnt-offerings; The Altar may not stay the leisire of the Temple; Gods Church may not wanther oblations; He can be none of the sons of *Israel*, that doth not euery day renue his acknowledgements of God.* *How feelyngly doethc these Jewes keepe*

keepe their feast of Tabernacles, whiles their soiourning in *Babylon* was still in their thoughts ; whiles as yet their Tēts must supply their ruined houses ? The first motions of zeale are commonly strong, and feruent ; How carefully doe these Gouernours and Priests make preparatiō for Gods Temple ? Carpenters and Masons are hyred ; *Tyrian* workmen are againe called for, and *Lebanon* is now anew solicited for Cedar trees. The materials are ready ; Euery *Israelite*, with such courage addresses himselfe to this seruice, as if his life lay in those stones : And now, whiles the foundation of the Temple was laying, the Priests stand in their habits, with Trumpets, the Leuites with

Z

Cym-

Cymbals, interchanging their holy Musick, and melodiously singing praises to the God of *Israel*, who had turned their captiuitie as the streames in the South, and honoured their eyes and hands with the first stones of his house: The people second their songs with shouts; The earth sounds, and heauen rings with the ioyfull acclamations of the multitude; It is no small comfort, in a good action, to haue begun wel; The entrance of any holy enterprise is commonly encountered with many discouragements, which if wee haue once overcome, the passage is smooth.

How would these men haue shouted at the laying on of the last stone of the battlements, who are thus

thus joyed with laying the first stones of the foundation? The end of any thing is better then the beginning: that hath certainty, this danger; this labour, that rest: little did these men thinke that, for all this, few of them should liue to see the roofe.

What different affections shall wee see produced in men by the same occasion? The younger leves shouted at this sight, the elder wept: The yonger shouted to see a new foundation; The elder ywept to remember the old: They who had seene no better, thought this goodly; They who had seen the former, thought this meane, and homely; more sorrowing for what they had lost, then rejoicing in so unequal a preparation.

Z 2

As

As it may fall out, it is some
peete of misery to haue beene
happier; euery abatement of the
degrees of our former height laies
siege to our thankfulnessse, for
lesser mercies. Sometimes, it
proues an aduantage to haue
knowne no better; he shall more
comfortably inioy present bene-
fits, who takes them as they are,
without any other comparisons,
then of the weakenesse of his
owne deseruings. It is nothing
to mee what my selfe or others
haue beene, so I bee now well:
Neither is it otherwise in particu-
lar Churches, if one be more glo-
riously built then another, yet if
the foundation be rightly layd in
both; one may not insult, the
other may not repine: Ech must

congratulate the truth to other,
each must thankfully inioy it
selfe.

The noise was not more loud,
then confused ; here was a dis-
cordant mixture of lamentation,
and shouting ; it was hard to say
whether drowned the other.

This assembly of *Iewes* was a
true image of Gods Church on
earth ; one sings, another cries ;
neuer doth it all either laugh or
mourne at once. It shall bee in
our triumph that all teares shall be
wipt from our eyes ; till then, our
passions must bee mixed, accor-
ding to the occasions.

The *Iewes* are busie at worke,
not more full of ioy, then hopes ;
and now that the wals begin to
ouerlook the earth, their thoughts

see me to ouerlooke the walls. But what great enterprise was euer set on foot for God, which found not some crosses ?

There was a mungrell brood of Samarit-Affryrians, which euer since the daies of Senacherib dwelt in the land of *Israel*; whose religion was a patched coate of seuerall shreds; some little part Iewish, the rest Pagan, not without much variety of idolatry. These hollow neighbours profer their assistance to the children of the captiuity; *Let vs build with you, for we seeke your God, as ye doe: and doe sacrifice to him.* Might men be their owne iudges, there would bee no heresie in the world, no mis-worship. It is true; these men did sacrifice to the true God;

The

The Lyons taught them to seeke, and the Israelitish Priest taught them to find the fashions of the God of the land : Some of these *Leues* knew their deuotion of old; They serued *Israels* God; but with their owne : As good no God, as too many. In a iust indignation therefore do these Iewish gouernours repell the partnership of such helpers : *You haue nothing to doe with vs, to build an house to our God; but we our selues together will build unto the Lord God of Israel.* The hand of an idolater is contagious. Yet, had it beene to the building of some fortresse, or common-hall, perhaps their ayd had not beene refused, but when the wals of Gods house are to be raised, this society had beene piacular.

Those that may not be allowed to helpe the worke, will aske no leauue to hinder it : their malicious suggestions weaken the hands of the people of *Judah*, and stirre vp authoritie to suppress them.

Cyrus was farre off ; neither liued he long after that gracious commission ; and besides was so taken vp the while with his wars, that he could not haue leasure to sift those querulous accusations. Now therefore, during the last yeares of *Cyrus*, and the raigne of his sonne *Cambyses*, and the long gouernment of *Darius Hystaspides*, and of his sonne *Xerxes*, or *Abasuerus*, and lastly of his sonne *Artaxerxes*, vntill the daies of *Darius Nothus*, (which was no lesse then

then fiue successions of Kings, (besides *Cyrus*) doe the wals of the Temple stand still, yea lye waste; subiect to the wrongs of time, and wether: the fit matter of sorrow to the *Levies*, insultation to the enemies, derision to passengers.

What a wide gap of time was here betwixt the foundation of Gods house, and the battlements? How large a triall doth God now secondly take of the faith, of the patience of his people? How large a proofe doth he giue of his own long-suffering? Oh God, when thou hadst but one house vpon earth, thou wert content to put vp delayes, yea affronts in the building of it; now thou hast many, it is no maruell if thy longanimity

ganimity and iustice, abide some of them to lie desolate : They are not stones , or mettals , or men that can make thee more glorious; thou best knowest when to serue thy selfe of all these; when to honour these with thy seruice.

A small matter hinders the worthest action ; as a little fish (they say) stayes the greatest ship : Before, the *Iewes* were discouraged with words, but now they are stopped by commands.

These eniuious *Samaritans* haue corrupted the gouernours which the Persian Kings set ouer those parts ; and from their hands haue obtained letters of deepe calumniation , to *Ahasuerus* the King; and after him, to his sonne *Artaxerxes* ; wherein *Jerusalem* is char-

charged with old rebellion to Kings; and for proofe, appellation is made to the records; frō which evidence, is spightfully inferred, that if these wals bee once built, the King shall receiue no tribute on this side the riuier. Neuer was Gods Church but subiect to reproaches.

Princes haue reason to bee ialous of their rights. The records are searcht; It soone appeares that within one Century of yeares, *Ierusalem* had rebelled against *Nebuchadnezzar*, and held out two yeares siege of that great *Babylonian*. The scandal of disloyaltie is perpetuall: although indeed they held him rather a preuailing enemie, then a lawfull Soueraine; One act disparages either place, or person,

person, to all posterities. Therefore shall the wals of *Ierusalem* lie waste, because it had once beeene trecherous ; After an hundred yeares doth that Citie rue one perfidious act of *Zedekiah*. Fidelitie to our gouernours is euer both safe, and honourable.

* Surnamed Long-hand.

Command is now sent out from * *Artaxerxes*, (euen the son of Queene *Esther*) to restrain the worke : All respects must cease with carnall minds , when their honors, or profits are in question. *Rebum* the Chancellor, and *Shimshai* the Scribe, come now armed with authoritie: The sword hath easily preuailed against the trowell. Still do the *Iewes* find them-selues as it were, captiues at home, and in silence, and sorrow, cease from

from their labors, vntill the dayes
of the next successour, *Darius No-
thus.*

As those that had learn'd to
sow after a bad crop; these *Levies*,
vpon the change of the Prince, by
the incouragement of the Pro-
phets of God, *Haggai*, and *Ze-
chariah*, take new heart to build
againe: If others power hinder
vs in the worke of God, our will
may not be guilty.

Their new gouernors come, as
before, to expostulate; *Who bath
commanded you to build this house,
and to make up this wall?* and what
are your names? They wisely and
modestly plead the seruice of the
God of heauen, the decree of *Cy-
rus*; still persisting to build, as if
the prohibition of *Artaxerxes* had
dyed

dyed with the author. The vnpartiall Gouernours doe neither claw, nor exasperate; but relating the humble and iust answer of the *Iewes*, moue the King that search may be made in the rolles of *Babylon*, whether such an Edict were made by *Cyrus*; and require his royll pleasure, concerning the validity of such pretended decree. *Darius* searches, findes, ratifies, inlargeth it, not onely charging his officers not to hinder the worke, but commanding to leuie summes of his own Tribute, beyond the riuuer, for the expences of the building, for the furnishing of sacrifices; threatening vtter ruine to the house of that man, and death to his person, who shold offer to impeach
this

this bounty : and shutting vp
with a zealous imprecation ; *The
God of heauen that hath caused his
name to dwell there, destroy all Kings
and people that shall put to their hand
to alter, and to destroy this house of
God which is at Ierusalem : I Darius
haue made a decree, let it be done with
speed.*

Who would haue lookt for
such an edict from a *Persian*? No
Salomon, no *Danid* could haue said
more.

The ruler of all hearts makes
choyce of his owne instruments,
and when hee pleaseth, can glori-
fie himselfe by those meanes,
which are least expected : That
sacred work which the husband,
and son of an *Ester* crossed, shall
bee happily accomplished by a

Darius:

Darius: In the sixt yeare of his raigne, is the Temple of God fully finished; and now the Dedication of it, is celebrated, by a ioyfull feast: An hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, foure hundred lambes, in a meet proportion, smoke vpon their altars: And now the children of the captiuitie thinke this day a sufficient payement for all their sorrowes: We haue reason to thinke it the fairest day that euer shone forth to vs, wherein the spirituall building of Gods house is raised vp in our soules. How should wee shout at the laying of this foundation, and feast at the laying on of the roofe? What other, what better sacrifice can wee offer vp to God in the sense of our ioy, then our selues?

selues? Let our hearts be at once, the Temple, the Altar, the sacrifice; Oh, God, bee thou glorified in all these, who hast graciously honoured all these with thy selfe.

Euery holy feast is now duly kept, the Priests know their diuisions, the Leuites their courses; and the whole seruice of God is put into a settled order; But, as there can be no new beginnings without imperfection, nor long continuance, without corruption; reformation is no lesse necessary then good institutions; *Ataxerxes Mnemon* hath learn'd of his father *Darius* to befriend Gods people; and striues to inherit his beneficence: vnder his gouernment, is *Ezra* the Priest, & learned scribe, sent with a large commission fro

* The
windfull.

A a Baby-

Babylon, to Ierusalem, to inquire into the wants, and redresse the disorders of the *Iewes*; with full power not onely to cary with him all the voluntaries of his nation; and the treasures contributed in all the prouince of *Babylon*; but to raise such summes, out of the Kings reuuenues, as shoulde be found requisite; and withall to ordaine Magistrates and Judges, and to crowne the Lawes with due execution, whether to death, or banishment, or confiscation; and lastly, with a large exemption of the Priests and Leuites, and all the inferiour officers of the Temple, from all toles, tributes, customes. Nothing wanted here, whether for direction, or encouragement. It is a signe of Gods great

great fauour to any nation, when the hearts of Soueraigne gouernours are raised vp , both to the choice of worthy agents, and to the commanding of pious , and restauratiue actions.

Holy and carefull *Ezra* gathers a new colony of *Iewes*, takes view of them, at the riuer of *Ahaba*; and finding a misse of the sonnes of *Levi* (without whom no company, no plantation can bee compleat) sends for their supply; And now, fully furnished, hee proclaimes a fast in the way.

I doe not heare him say , The journey is long and dangerous ; the people haue need of all their strength. I could well wish vs al afflicted with a religious fast, were it not that the abatement of

A a z the

the courage, and vigour of the multitude may indanger our success; But without all these carnall consultations, he begins with this solemne act of humiliation; It is better to haue God strong in our weaknesse, then to haue flesh and blood strong in his neglect.

Artaxerxes was a Patron of the *Levites*, yet a Pagan by profession; wise *Ezra* was afraid of quenching those sparkes of piety which he descryed in this semi-proselite. Rather therefore then hee will seeme to imply a distrust in the prouidence of that God, in whose seruice he went by seeking a conuoy of souldiers from the King; *Ezra* chooses to put himselfe vp on the hazard of the way, and the im-

immediate protection of the Almighty. Any death were better then to heare *Artaxerxes* say, Is this the man that so confidently told me, *The hand of our God is vpon all them for good that seeke him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him?* Doth he believe himselfe that he thus doubts ere he begin? Dare he not trust his God with his owne busynesses?

The resolutions of faithfull hearts are heroicall: No heathen man shall stumble at *Ezraes* feare: Hee can finde more assurance in his fast, then in a *Persian* band: with a couragious relyance vpon the hand of his God he puts himselfe into the iourney; and finds nothing but safety

and successe: The fidelity of the Almighty neuer disappointed the confidence of his seruants. All the army of *Artaxerxes* could not haue been so strong a gard to the *Jewes*, as their inuisible protection.

In the space of foure moneths is *Ezra*, and his company happily arriued at *Ierusalem*: where hee ioyes to see the new Temple, and his old Colleagues: and now hauing deliuered vp the charge of his treasure, by waight, in the chambers of the house of the Lord, hee applies himselfe to his worke, and deliuers the Kings Commissions to the Lieu-tenants and Gouernors, for their vtmost affistance.

The Princes of *Iudah* doe not

(for

(for ought I heare) repine at the large Patent granted to this Priest, nor say, What doth a man of this robe meddle with placing, or displacing Magistrates? with execution of iudgements to death, bonds, banishment? but rather as congratulating this power to sacred hands, gladly present vnto him all their grieuances. Truly religious hearts cannot grudge any honour to their spirituall guides.

This holy Commissioner is soone welcomed with a sad Bill of complaint, from some good Peeres of *Israel*; wherein they charge diuers of the Priests, Leuites, people, not to haue separated themselues from the idolatrous inhabitants of the lands, nor

A a 4 (there-

(therefore) from their abominations, euen from *Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites*, and the rest of those branded nations ; That they haue taken of their daughters for themselues, and for their sonnes : So that the holy seed haue mingled themselues with those forbidden people ; and, (which made the matter so much more hainous, lesse remediable) that *the hand of the Princes, and Rulers, hath beene chiefe in this trespassse.*

Oh hypocriticall *Iewes*, did ye refuse to suffer your *Samaritan* neighbours to ioyne with you in building a liuelesse house vnto God, and doe ye now ioyne affinitie with a more accursed generatio for the building of liuing houses vnto posteritie ? for the pul-

pulling down of the liuely house
of God ?

How could *Ezra* heare this
with his cloathes, his haire, his
beard vntorne? What griefe, what
astonishment must this newes
needs bring to a zealous heart ?
And, were it not that the consci-
ence of his sincere respect to Gods
glory relieved him, how could
Ezra choose but repent him of his
journey ; and say ; Am I commen-
from *Babylon* to find Paganisme
in *Iudah*? Did I leau *Persians*, to
meet with *Canaanites*? what doe
I here, if *Jerusalem* bee remoued ?
How much better were a cleare
captiutie, then an idolatrous free-
dome ? Wo is me, that hauing left
many Iewish harts in *Babylon*, I
now am forced to find heathen
blood

blood in *Ierusalem*.

As a man distracted with sorrow, *Ezra* sits downe vpon the earth with his garmets rent, with the haire of his head, and beard pluckt off, wringing his hands, knocking his brest, not mouing from his place vntill the euening sacrifice. It is hard to be too much affected with the publike sinnes of Gods people. Those who find themselues in the shipp of Gods Church, cannot but bee much troubled with euery dangerous leake that it takes : Common causes are not more neglected by the carelesse, then taken to heart by the wise, and godly.

There, and thus, *Ezra* sits asto-
nied vntill the euening sacrifice :
others resorted to him the while ;
eu'en

euен all that trébled at the words
of the God of *Israel*; but to help
on his sorrow, not to relieue it;
neither doth any man with a mi-
tigation of his owne, or others
griefe. At laſt, hee rises vp from
his heauiness, and caſts himſelfe
vpon his knees, and ſpreads out
his hands vnto the Lord his God:
Wherfore was all that penſiu-
neſſe, fasting, ſilence, tearing of
haire and clothes, but to ſerue as
a meete preface to his prayers?
wherein he ſo freely powres out
his hart, as if it had beene all diſ-
ſolued into deuotion; professing
his shame to lift vp his face to-
wards the throne of God; con-
feſſing the iniquities of his peo-
ple, which were increased ouer
their heads, and growne vp vnto

to heauen ; fetching their trespass
farre, and charging them deepe;
feelingly acknowledging the iust
hand that had followed them, in
all their iudgements, and the iust
confusion wherein they now
stand before the face of their
God.

Teares, and sighes, and groue-
lings accompanied his prayers ;
the example and noise whereof
drew *Israel* into a participation of
this publike mourning, *For the
people wept very sore* : How can
they choose but thinke, If he thus
lament for vs, how should wee
grieue for our selues ?

All *Iudah* went away merrily
with their sinne, till this checke
of *Ezra*, now they are afflicted :
Had not the hands of the Peeres
beene

beene in this trespassse, the people had not beene guilty ; had not the cheekeſ of *Ezra* beene first drenched with teares, the people had not beene penitent. It cannot be ſpoken, what power there is in a great example, whether to euill, or good.

Prayers and teares are nothing without indeauors. *Shechaniah*, the ſonne of *Iehiel* puts the firſt life into this buſineſſe. Having ſeconded the complaint of *Ezra*, he now addes, *Yet there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Now therefore let vs make a couenant with our God to put away all the vices, and ſuch as are borne of them. Arife, for this matter belongeth to thee; Wee also will be with thee; Be of good courage, and doe it.*

When

When mischiefe is once done, the chiefe care is how to redresse it. The best way of redresse is the deliberate vndoing of that which wee haue rashly committed; The surest obligation to the vndoing of an euill act, is an oath or couenant made with God for the performance.

There is no man so wise, but hee may make vse of good counsell; there is no man so forward, but he may abide incitation. It is no small encouragement to see an harty assistance in an eniuious and difficult seruice. *Then arose Ezra, and made the chiefe Priests, the Leuites and all Israel to sweare that they should doe according to this word.*

It is halfe done that is thus assured. There was need of a strōg power

power to dissolute a matrimoniall, though inordinate loue : Doubtlesse, these men had maried out of affection; their hearts were no lesse set vpon these wiues (though heathenish) then if they had beene of their owne Tribes ; neither were their chil-dren, thus begotten lesse deare vnto them, then if they had laine in lewisch wombes ; Nothing lesse then an oath of God, therefore could quit these passions; That is both required and taken.

Now begins *Ezra* to conceiue some hope of present redresse; the comfort whereof, yet, cannot turne off his sorrow for the offence passed ; Hee neither eates bread, nor drinkeſ water, willingly punishing himself, because

Israel

Israel had sinned : Now shall his Countreymen easily reade in his face their owne penance, and iust humiliation; and say; This man takes no ioy in our sufferings; bee would not smart thus for vs, if he did not descry more danger towards vs then we can apprehēd.

Proclamation is made through *Iudah* and *Ierusalem*, vnder paine of forfaiture of substance, and ex-communication from Gods people; that all the children of the captivity should gather them-selues together vnto *Ierusalem*. They are met accordingly ; The Courts of Gods house are throned with penitents, and now, as if the heauen would teach them what to doe, the cloudes raine downe abundance of teares.

What

What with those sad shoures,
what with their inward remorse,
the people sit trembling in the
open Courts; and humbly wait
for the reproofe, for the sentence
of *Ezra*. He rises vp; and with a
seuere countenance, layes before
them their sinnes, their amends:
The sinne of their strange wiles;
the amends of their confession, of
their separation; nor sparing to
search their wound, nor neg-
lecting the meet plaister for their
cure.

The people, as willing to bee
healed, yeeld themselues patiently
to that rough hand; not shink-
ing at the paine, nor favouring the
sore; *As thou hast said, so must wee
do*; Only cravinge a fit propor-
tion of time; and a due assistance

B b for

for the dispatch of so long and
important a worke. Esaye gladly
markes to this, not so much re-
questly as counsell of Israel; The
charge is diuided to men; and
dayes. For two moneths space
the commissioners sit close; and
within that compasse, finishe this
busynesse, nothing more than little
thero necessary is doubtlesse much
variaunce of passion or met with the
in this busynesse. Here you
should haue seen an affectionate
husband bitterly weeping at the
dismissall of a loyall wife, and
drowning his last farewelle in
sobs; there you might haue seen
a passionate wife, hanging vpon
the armes of her beloued husband,
and on her knees, looing vpon
him by his former yowres; and
at

the deare pledges of their loues ;
and profering wwith many teates,
to redeeme the losse of her husband
with the change of her reli-
gion : Here, you might haue
seen, the kindred and parents of
the dismissed, shutting vp their
denied suites wwith rage and
threats. There, the abandoned
children, kneeling to thir seemly-
ingly-cruell father, beseeching
him not to cast off the fruit of his
oyne loynes, and expostulating
what they haue offendid in be-
ing his. The resolute Israellites
must be deafe, and blind to these
moving objects, and so farre for-
get nature, as to put off part of
themselves. Persons in conno-
nices haue reason to yeeld no
publike mishiefd wth englis-

tainment makes that sinne hard to be ejected; whose first motions might haue beeene repelled with ease.

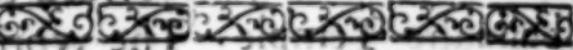
Had not the prohibition of these mariages been expresse, and their danger and mischiefe palpable, the care of their separation had not bred so much tumult in *Israel*. Hee that ordained matrimony, had vpon fearefull curses forbidden an vnequall yoke with Infidels. Besides the marring of the Church by the mixture of an vnholie seed, religion suffered for the present, and all good hearts with it. Many teares, many sacrifices needed to expiate so foule an offence, and to set *Israel* straight againe.

All this while euен these men

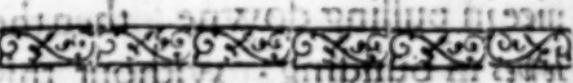
line *Iewes* were yet forward to build the Temple; The worst sinners may yeeld an outward conformity to actions of piety: *Ezra* hath done more seruice in pulling downe, then the *Iewes* in building; without this act, the temple might haue stood, religion must needes haue falne. *Bebel* had beene translated to *Ierusalem*; *Iewes* had turned *Gentiles*.

Oh happy indeauors of devout and holy *Ezra* that hath at once restored *Iudah* to God, and to it selfe.

Bb. 3 NEHEMIAH

of his wif of 2000/ wch he had


NEHEMIAH building the walls of Jerusalem.



Nehemiah
1, 2, 3, 4,
Chapt.



Hirteben years were now passed since Ezraes going vp to Jerusalem, whē Nebemiah the religious Countier of Artaxerxes, inquires of the estate of his Country, and brethiren of Iudea: Hee might well finde that holy scribe had not beene idle: The commission of Artaxerxes had beene improoued by him to the vtmost; Disorders were reformed, but the walls lay waſt; The Temple was

was built, but the Citie was ruinous ; and if some streets were repaired , yet they stood vngarded, open to the mercy of an enemie, to the infestation of ill neighbourhood : Great bodies must have slow motions ; As *Jerusalem*, so the Church of God, whose type it was, must bee fainght by leasure.

Nehemiah late iwarne in the Court at *Shushan*, fauored by the great King *Artaxerxes* ; nothing could be wanting to him, whether for pleasure, or state ; what needed hee to trouble his head with thoughts for *Jerusalem*? what if those remote wals lay on heaps whiles himselfe dwelt faire? what if his far-distant countrymen be despised, whiles himselfe is ho-

noured, by the great Monarch of the world? And if hee, among

It is not so easie for gracious dispositions to turne off the publike calamities of Gods Church; neither can they doe other then leesse their priuate felicities in the common distresses of the vniversal body. *If I forget thee, O Ierusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; If I doe not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roose of my mouth.*

Many *Jewes* went vp from Babylon, and Shushan, to Ierusalem, few euer returned voluntarily from their native home to the region of their captivity: Some occasion drew *Hanani* with certaine others of *Iudah*, to this voyage. Of them doth *Nehemiah*

care.

carefully inquire the present condition of *Ierusalem*: It was no newes that the people were afflicted, and reproached, the walls broken downe, the gates burnt with fire. Euer since the furious vastation of *Nebuzaradan*, that City knew no better termes: seldome when doth the spirituall *Ierusalem* fare otherwise in respect of outward estate: Externall glory and magnificence is an vnsure note of the Church.

Well had *Nehemiah* hoped that the gracious edict, and beneficēce of *Darius*, and the successiue patronage of his Lord *Artaxerxes* had by the continuance of twen-ty yeares fauour aduanced the strength and glory of *Ierusalem*, but now, finding the holy City
to

to lie still in the dust of her confusion; neglected of God, despised of men, hee sits downe and weepes, and mournes, and fasts, and prayes to the God of heauen. How many saw those ruines, and were little affected? he heares of them a far off, and is thus passionate? How many were vpon this sight affected with a fruitlesse sorrow, his mourning is ioyned with the indeuors of redresse. In vaine is that griefe which hath no other end then it selfe.

¶ *Nehemiah* is resolued to kneele to the King, his master, for the repaire of his *Jerusalem*; he dares not attempt the suit till hee haue begun with God; This good Courtier knew well that the hearts of these earthly Kings are in the o-
uer-

uer-ruling hand of the King of heauen to incline whither hee pleaseth: Our prayers are the only true meanes to make way for our successe; If in all our occasions we doe not begin with the first mouer, the course is preposterous and commonly speeds thereafter.

Who dares censure the piety of Courtiers, when he finds *Nebemiah* standing before *Artaxerxes*? Euen the Persian Pallace is not vncapable of a Saint: No man that waits on the Alear at *Jerusalem* can compare for zeale, with him; that waits on the cup of a Pagan Monarch: The mercies of God are vnlimited to places, to callings.

Thus armed with deuotions, doth *Nebemiah* put himselfe in-

to

to the presence of his master *Ard-taxerxes*. His face was ouerclouded with a deepe sadnessse, neither was hee willing to cleare it. The King easily notes the disparity of the countenance of the bearer, & the wine that he beares: and in a gracious familiarity askes the reason of such vnwonted change; How well it becomes the great to stoope vnto a courteous affability, and to exchange words of respect, euen with their humble vassalls.

Nebemiah had not been so long in the Court but hee knew that Princes like no other then cheerefull attendants; neither was hee wont to bring any other face into that presence, then smooth, and smiling.

Great-

Greatnesse vses to bee full of suspition, and where it sees a de-
jection, and sowernesse of the browes, is ready to apprehend some sullen thoughts of discontent-
ment, or, at the least, construes it
for a disrespect to that soueraign-
ty, whose beames should bee of
power to disperse all our inward
mists : Even good manners for-
bid a man to presse into the pre-
sence of a Prince, except hee can
either lay by these vnpleasing pas-
sions, or hide them : So had Ne-
hemiah hitherto done : Now, he
purposely suffers his sorrow to
ooke through his eyes, that it may
worke both inquiry, and com-
passion from his master, neither
doth hee fail of his hopes in ei-
ther ; *Why is thy countenance sad,*
seeing

feeling thou art not sicke. How sensible doe we think the father of mercies is of all our pensiu thoughts, when an heathen master is so tender of a seruants grieved. How ready should our tongues bee to lay open our cares to the God of all comfort, when we see Nehemiah so quicke in the exprefſions of his sorrow to an vncertaine care. Let the King live for euer. Why ſhould not my countenance bee ſad when the City the place of my fathers ſequelphres lyeth waste, and the gates thereof are burnt with fire. Not without an humble preface doth Nehemiah lay forth his grievance; Complaints have often an imploaſing bathesse in them, which may be taken off by ſome diſcret
prince.

secret absintuation : Although it could not but sound well in the generous care of Artaxerxes, that his servant was so carefull for the honour of his Countrey; As nature hath made vs all members of a community, and hath giuen vs common interests, so it is that pleasing to vs, to see these publike cares diuide vs from our enemy.

The King easilie sitteth vs a secret supplication wrapt vp in this moanfull answyer, which the modest suiter was afraid to disclose; and therefore he helpe that basfull motion into the light; For what dost thou brake request? It is the praise of bonyt sondraye on the last petitions of starefull suppliantes. But now; I bid you Nehemiah dares not open his mouth

mouth of the King, till his heart hath opened it selfe by a sudden ejaculation to his God; No busynesse can bee so hasty, but our prayer may preuent it; the wings whereof are so nimble, that it can fly vp to heauen, and solicit God, and bring downe an answer, before euer our words need to come forth of our lips. In vaine shall we hope that any designe of ours can prosper, if wee haue not first sent this messenger on our errand.

After this silent, and insensible preparation, *Nehemiah* moues his suit to the King; not yet at once; but by meet degrees; first he craves leauie for his iourney, and for the building; then he craves ayd for both; Both are granted; *Nehemiah* departs furnished with

with letters to the governours, for a conuoy; with letters to the keeper of the Kings forest for timber. Not more full of desire, then hope.

Who euer put his hand to any great worke for the behoofe of Gods Church, without opposition? As the walls of the Temple found busie enemies, so shall the walls of the City; and these so much more; as they promise more security and strength to Jerusalem: Saphballat the Deputie-Lieutenant of the Moabites, and Tobiah, the like officer to the Ammonites, and Geshem; to the Arabians, are galled with envy at the small of a man authorized to seek the welfare of the children of Israel: There can not bee a greater

Cc

vexa-

vexation to wicked hearts, then
to see the spiritual *Jerusalem* in any
likelihood of prosperity. Euill
spirits and men need no other
torment, then their owne de-
spight.

This wise Courtier hath learnt
that secrecy is the surest way of
any important dispatch. His er-
rand could not but be knowne to
the gouernors; their furtherance
was inioyned for the prouision
of materialls; else the walls of
Jerusalem had ouer-lookt the first
notice of their heathen-neighbors.
Without any noisedoth Nehemiah
arise in the dead of night, and ta-
king some few into his compa-
nie, none into his counsaile, he
secretly rounds the decayed wals
of *Jerusalem*, and viewes the brea-
ches

ches, and observes the gates; and returnes home in silence, ioying in himselfe to fore-see those reparations, which none of the inhabitants did once dreame of: At last, when hee had fully digested this great worke in his owne brest, hee calls the rulers and Citzens together, and hauing condol'd with them, the common distresse, and reproach, hee tells them of the hand of his God, which was good vpon him; hee shewes them the gracious commission of the King, his master, for that good worke. They answer him with a zealous encouragement of each other, *Let vs rise vp and build!* Such an hearty imitation countenanced by authority hath easily strengthned

ned the hands of the multitude; with what obseruance and dearness doe they now looke vpon their vnexpected patron? how do they honour him as a man sent from heauen, for the welfare of *Ierusalem*? Every man flyes to his hodde, and trowell, and rejoyces to second so noble a leader, in laying a stone in that wall of their comon defence.

Those emulous neighbours of theirs, *Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem*, the cheife commanders of *Moab, Ammon, Arabia*, hauing soone espoyed the first morter, that is laid vpon that old foundation, Envy is vsually more quicke-sighted then louet: And now they scornfully apply themselues to these despised *Jewes*, and thinke to scoffe them

them out of their worke? The fauourablest persecution of any good cause is the lash of lewd tongues; whether by bitter taunts or by scurrilous inuectiues: which it is as impossible to auoyd, as necessary to contemne. The barking of these dogs doth not hinder *Nehemiah* from walking on his way; professing his confidence in the God of heauen, whose work that was; he shakes off their impotent malice, and goes on cheerfully to build: Every *Israelite* knowes his station. *Eliashib* the high Priest, and the rest of that sacred tribe put the first hand to this worke; they build the sheep-gate, and sanctifie it; and in it, all the rest. As the first fruits of the field, so the first stones
of

of the wall, are hallowed to God, by the consecration of those devout agents : That businesse is like to prosper which beginnes with God.

No man was idle, no part was intermitted ; All Jerusalem was at once encompassed w^t busie labourers. It cannot bee, but the ioynt-indeauors of faithfull harts must raise the walles of the Church.

Now Sanballat, and his brethren, fiftid some matter to spend their scoffes vpon ; What doe these feeble lesnes ? Will they fortifie them-selues ? Will they sacrifice ? Will they make an end in a day ? Will they revive the stones out of the heapes of rubbish which are burnt ?

How basely do carnall minds think

thinke of the projects, and actions
of Gods children; therefore vilify-
ing them, because they measure
them by no other line, then out-
ward probability. Oh foolish
Moabites, this worke is Gods, and
therefore in despight of all your
tonges and hands, it shall prosper:
He heares you whom yee haue
blasphemed, and shall turne your
reproach vpon your own heads.

And, thou proud *Ammonite*, that
couldst say, *If a Foxe goe vpon their
stone-wall, bee shall breake it downe;*
shalt well find, that all the wolv-
ish troopes of your confederats
shall not bee able to remoue one
stone of this sure fortification;
Whiles *Moab* and *Ammon* repine
and bluster in vaine this wal shal
rise; & when *Moab* & *Ammon* shal

lye in the dust, this wall shall stand. The morter that hath
beene tempered with so many
teares, and layed with so many
prayers, canhot but outlast all the
flints, and marbles of humane
confidence.

Now the growth of this wall
hath turned the minth of the
aduersaries into rage. These Moa-
bites, Ammonites, Arabians, Ashdo-
dites conspire all together, to fight
against Jerusalem; and whiles the
morter is yet greenie, to demolish
those enuied heapes.

What hath this City offended
in desiring to be defenced? what
wrong could it be to wish a free-
dom from wrongs? Were this
people so mighty, that there could
be danger in ouer-powring their
neigh-

neighbours, or in resisting a common sovereign; there might have appeared some colour for this hostile opposition; but, alas, what could a despised handful do to the prejudice of either? It is quartell enough to *Jerusalem* that it would not be miserable.

Neither is it otherwise with the head of these hellish complices; there needs no other cause of his utmost fury, then to see a poor soule strugling to get out of the reach of his tyrannie. So doe savage beasts bristle vp themselves, and make the most fiercee assaults when they are in danger of lossing the prey, which they had once seized on.

In the meane while, what doth Nehemiah with his letters for their com-

common safety? They pray, and watch; they pray vnto God, they watch against the enemy,

Thus, thus shall wee happily preuaile against those spirituall wickednesse; which war against our soules: No euill can surprize vs if we watch; no euill can hurt vs, if we pray; *This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.*

There was need of a continuall vigilancy; the enemy was not more malicious, then subtle, and had said; *They shall not know, neither see, till wee come in the midst among them, and slay them.* Open force is not so dangerous, as close dissimulation; They meant to see me *Ierobes*, whiles they were *Mosabites* and *Ammonites*; and in the clothes

clothes of brethren purposed to hide murderers. Neuer is Satan so preuailent, as when hee comes transformed into an Angell of light.

It was a mercifull prouidence of God , that made these mens tongues the blabs of their oygne counsell. Many a fearfull designe had prospered , if wickednesse could haue beeene silent. Warning is a lawfull gard to a wise aduersary : Now doth *Nehemiah* arme his people; and for the time, changes their trowels into swyrdes, & speares, and bowes ; raising vp their courage with a vehement exhortation , to remember the Lord, which is great, and terrible, and to fight for their brethren, their sonnes, their daughters, their wifes, and

and their houses. Nothing can so
harten vs to the encountring of
any euill, as the remembrance of
that infinite power and wisedome
which can either auert, or mitti-
gate, or sanctifie it : wee could
not faint if wee did not forget
God.

Necessity vrges a man to fight
for himself, loue inables his hand
to fight for those which challenge
a part in him; where loue meets
with necessity, there can want no
indeuor of victory ; Necessity
can make euen cowards, valiant,
loue makes the valiant, vnrefusta-
ble : Nehemiah doth not there-
fore perswade these *Levies* to fight
for themselues, but for theirs :
The enlargement of the interest,
and danger, cannot but quicken
the dullest spirits. Disc-

Discouered counsels are alreadie preuented; These serpents dye by being first seene; *When the enemies heard that it was knowne unto vs*, they let fall their plot. Could wee descry the enterprises of Satan, that tempter would returne ashamed.

It is a safe point of wisedome to carrie a iealous eye ouer those, whom we haue once found hollow, and hostile: From that time forth *Nehemiah* diuided the tasks, betwixt the crowell, and the sword; so disposing of every *Israelite*, that whiles one hand was a Maiton, the other was a fouldier: one is for worke, the other for defence. Oh diuinely image of the Church militant, wherein euery one labours y^e weaponed; wherein

wherein there is neither an idle
souldier, nor a secure workman:
euery one so builds, as that he is
ready to ward temptations; euerie
one so wields the sword of
the spirit, for defence, that, with-
all, hec builds vp himselfe in his
most holy faith; here is neither a
fruitlesse valour, nor an vnsafe di-
ligence.

But what can our weapons a-
uaile vs, if there be not meanes to
warne vs of an enemie? Without
a Trumpet we are armed in vain.
*The worke is great and large, and we
are separated vpon the wall, one farre
from another:* Yea, so farre as the
utmost bounds of the earth, are
wee separated one from another,
vpon the wals of the spirituall Ie-
rusalem; onely the sacred Trum-
pets

pets of God, call vs, who are di-
stant in place, to a combination
in profession. And who are those
Trumpets, but the publike mes-
sengers of God, of whom God
hath said; *If the Watchmen see the
sword come, and blow not the trumpet,
and the people be not warned, if the
sword come, and take any person from
among them, hee is taken away in his
iniquitie; but his blood will I require
at the watchmans hand.* Wo bee to
vs if we found not; if the sound
we giue be vncertaine: wo be to
our people, if when we premo-
nish them of enemies, of iudg-
ments, they sit still vnmoued, not
buckling themselues to a resi-
stance, to a preuention.

Eze.33.6.

It is a mutuall ayd, to which
these Trumpets inuite vs; wee
might

might fight apart, without the
signals of warr; In what place yee
heare the sound of the Trumpet, resort
ye thither unto vs. There can bee
no safety to the Church, but wher
euery man thinkes his life, and
welfare consists in his fellowes;
Conioyned forces may prosper,
single oppositions are desperate;
All hearts and hands must meet
in the common quarrell,

of oW hand mandatet odi in
bruel, edili, con bruel evi et
oedoy; natiyoy ad am o
ou beople, ii wappo we bieuo
out chout to ouewice, to iudg
on, boudy hifil al t
NEHEMIAH
packiung spesigines to t lef
iudice to a delusion.

abidys o byallum in si it
acc; evi Trumpeas iunice a
wrigge

ungracious and also abysse land

N E H E M I A H *redressing
the extortion of the
Jewes.*

W *I*ch ay what difficultie do these miserable Jewes scathe in their *Jerusalem*? The feare of foraine enemies doth not more afflict them, then the extortion of their owne : Dearth is added unto warre : Miseries doe not stay for a manerly succussion to each other, but in a rude importunitie throng in, at once. Babel may be

Dd

built

built with ease, but whosoeuer goes about to raise the walls of Gods Citie, shall haue his hands full : The incursion of publike enemies may be preuented with vigilancy and power; but there is no defence against the secret gripes of oppression.

There is no remedy, the *Iewes* are so taken vp with their trowel, and sword, for the time, that they cannot attend their trades; so as, whiles the wall did rise, their estates must needs impayre: Even in the cheapest season they must needs be poore, that earned nothing but the publike safarie, how much more in a common scarcity ? their houses, lands, vine-yards are therefore mortgaged, yea their very skins are sold, forcom-
plid b CI to

to their brethren: Necessity forces them to sell that, which it was cruelty to buy; What will we not, what must we not part with, for life? The couetous rulers did not consider the occasions of this want, but the aduantage. Sometimes, a bargaine may bee as vnimercifull as a robbery: Charity must be the rule in all contracts; the violation whereof, whether in the matter, or the price, cannot but be sinfull.

There could not bee a iuster ground of expostulation then this of the oppressed *Jewes*: *Our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children*; and loe, we bring into bondage our sonnes and our daughters: whiles there is no difference in nature, why should there bee

such an iniurious disproportion
in condition. Euen the same flesh
may beare a iust inequality; Some
may be rulers, while others are
subiect; Some wealthy, others
poore; but why those wealthy
rulers should tyrannize ouer
those poore inferiours, and turne
brotherhood into bondage no
reason can be giuen but lawlesse
ambition; If there were one flesh
of Peeres, another of Peasants,
there should be some colour for
the proud impositions of the
great, as because the flesh of beasts
is in a lower ranke then ours, we
kill, we deuoure it at pleasure; but
now, since the large body of
mankinde consists of the same
flesh, why should the hand strike
the foot? And if one flesh may
challenge

challenge meet respects from vs,
how much more one spirit ;
The spirit is more noble, then the
flesh is base ; the flesh is dead
without the spirit, the spirit with-
out the flesh, actiuē and immor-
tall. Our soule, though shapelesse,
and immateriall, is more appa-
rently one, then the flesh ; And if
the vnity of our humane spirit
call vs to a mutuall care, and ten-
dernesse in our cariage, each to o-
ther, how much more of the di-
vine ? by that we are men, by this
we are Christians : As the soule
animates vs to a naturall life, so
doth Gods Spirit animate the
soule to an heauenly ; which is so
one, that it cannot bee deuided.
How shoulde that one spirit cause
vs so farre to forget all naturall,

D d 3 and

and ciuill differences, as not to contemne, not to oppresse any whom it informeth?

They are not Christians, nor men, that can injoy the miseries of their brethren, whether in the flesh or spirit.

Good *Nehemiah* cannot choose but bee much moued at the barbarous extortio[n] of the people; and now, like an vnpartiall go[u]ernour, hee rebukes the Rulers and Nobles, whose hand was thus bloody with oppression. As of fishes, so of men, the lesser are a prey to the great: It is an ill use made of power, wh[en] the weight of it serues onely to crush the weake. There were no living amongst men had not God ordained higher then the highest; and

and yet higher then they. Emi-
nency of place cannot bee better
improved, then by taking down
mighty offenders.

If nobility doe embase it selfe
to any soule sinne, it is so much
more worthy of coertion, by
how much the person is of grea-
ter markē.

The iustice of this reproaſe
could not but shame impudence
it ſelfe; *Wee after our abilitie haue*
redeemed our brethren the Iudees
which were fold to the heathen, and
will you fold your brethren, or ſhall
they be fold to vs? Shall they finde
at home that yoke of bondage
which they had put off at
broad? whiles they are ſtill Iudees,
ſhall we turne *Aſſyrians*? If they
muſt be ſlaues, why not rather to

Dd 4 ene-

enemies, then to brethren? How much more tollerable were a forrayne seruitude, then a domesti-
call: Be ashamed, ô ye Nobles of
Israel, to rentre *Babylon* in *Ierusalem*. I maruell not if the offend-
ders be stricken dumb with so
vnauswerable an expostulation;
Guiltinesse, and confusio[n] haue
stopt their mouthes.

Many of those who haue not
had grace enough to restraine sin,
yet are not so vtterly void of grace
as to maintaine sinne; Our after-
wits are able to discerne a kinde
of vnireasonablenes in those wic-
ked actions, which the first ap-
pearance represents vnto vs plau-
sible. Gaine leads in sinne, but
shame followes it out. There are
those that are bold and witty to
beare

beare out commodious, or pleasant euills; neither could these *Iewish* enormities, haue wanted some colours of defence; Their stocke was their owne, which might haue beeene otherwise am-
proued, to no lesse profit; The offer, the suit of these bargaines
was from the sellers; These es-
chates fell into their hands, vn-
sought; neither did their contract
cause the neede of their brethren,
but receue it. But their consci-
ence will not beare this plea. I
know not whether the mainte-
nance of the least euill bee not
worse, then the commission of
the greatest; This may bee of
frailty, that argues obstinacy:
There is hope of that man that
can blush, and be silent.

blush

After

After conuiction of the fact, it is seasonable for Nehemiah, to perswade reformation: No oratory is so powerfull, as that of mildnesse: especially when we haue to doe with those, who either through stomach, or greatnessse, may not endure a rough reproofe: The drops that fall easilly vpon the corne, ripen, and fill the eare; but the stormy showeres that fal with violence, beat down the stalkes flat to the earth, and lay whole fields, without hope of recovery: Who can resist this sweet & soueraign reprobation; Ought yee not to walke in the feare of our God, because of the reproach of the heathen, our enemies? Did we dwell alone in the midst of the earth, yet the feare of our God should

should ouer-awe our wayes; but now that we dwell in the midſt of our enemies, whose eies are bent vpon all our actions, whose tongues are as ready to blaſphemē God, as we to offend him, how carefully ſhould we auoid thofe ſins, which may draw shame vpon our profeſſion?

Now, the ſcandal is worse then the fact; Thus, ſhall religion ſuffer more from the heathen, then our brethren doe from vs: If iuſtice, if charity cannot ſway with vs, yet, let the ſcornfull iuſtakations of the propane Gentiles, affright vs fro these pressures. No ingenuous diſpoſition can be ſo tender of his own diſgrace, as the true *Israelite* is of the reproch of his God: What is it that
he

hee wyl not rather refraine, doe,
suffer; then that glorious name
shall hazard a blemish ? They
cannot want outward retentives
from sin ; that liue either among
friends, or enemies ; if friends,
they may not be grieued, if ene-
mies, they may not be prouoked :
Those that would liue well, must
stand in awe of all eyes ; Euen
those that are without the Church
yet may not bee without our re-
gard : No person can bee so con-
temptible , as that his censure
should be contemned.

In dissuading from sinne, rea-
son it selfe cannot preuaile more
then example. *I likewise, and my
brethren, and my seruants might ex-
act of them money, and corne. But
from the time that I was appointed to
the*

the charge of Iudah, I, and my brethren haue not eaten the bread of the gouernour. Hee shall neuer rule well, that doth all that hee may : It is not safe for either part, that a Prince should liue at the height of his power : And if the greatest abate of their right, is it for inferiors to extort ? Had Nehemiah aimed at his own greatnessse, no man could haue had fairer pretences for his gaine.

The former gouernors that were before him were chargeable vnto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, besides fourty shekels of siluer. His foot had not first trod in this commodious path ; it was beaten by the steps of his predecessors ; neither did any of them walke beside it : How euer it might

might bee enuious to raise new taxations, yet to continue those he found vnapined at, had been out of the reach of exception : A good Gouernour lookes not so much what hath beene done, as what should bee ; Precedents are not the rule, whereby hee rules, but iustice, but piety. *So did not I, because of the feare of the Lord :* Lawes are not a straiter curbe to subiects, then conscience is to good Princes.

They dare not doe what they cannot doe charitably : what aduantage can they thinke it to bee from vnder the controllment of men, when the God of heaven notes, and punishes their offences. Who so walketh by this rule, can neither erre, nor mis-carie ; It
is

is not trusting to the externall remedies of sinne, either they are not alwaies present; or if present, not powerfull enough; but if the feare of God haue once taken vp the heart, it goes euer with vs, and is strong enough to ouer-maister the forceablest temptation.

Therefore must these *Iewes* follow this example of *Nehemiah*, because he followed not the example of his predecessors; because he left their euill, they must imitate his good. In vaine shall rulers aduise against their owne practice; when they lead the way, they may well challenge to bee followed: Seldome hath it beene euer scene that great persons haue not beeene seconded in euill, why should not their power serue to make

make patternes of their vertues?

Thus well did it speed with **Nebemiah**; his mercifull cariage, and zealous suit haue drawne the Rulers to a promise of restitution; *We will restore them, and will require nothing of them, so will we doe as thou sayest.*

It is no small aduantage that these Nobles must forgoe, in their releases: there cannot be a better signe of a sound amendment, then that we can be content to be losers by our repentance; Many formall penitents haue yeelded to part with so much of their sinnes, as may abate nothing of their profit; as if these Rulers should haue beeene willing to restore the persons, but wchall should haue stand stify to require their sums:

This

This whining and partiall satisfaction had been thanklesse. True remorse inlargeth the heart, and openeth the hand to a bountifull redemption of our errors.

Good purposes doe too often coole in time, and vanish into a carelesse forgetfulness; *Nehemiah* feared this issue of these holy resolutions ; and therefore he prosecutes them in their first heat, not leauing these promises, till he had secured them, with an oath; The Priests are called for, that in their mouthes, the adiuration may be more solemne, & sacred; It is the best point of wisedome to take the first opportunity of fixing good motions, which otherwise are of themselves light, & sleightie. To make all yet more sure,

Ec their

their oathes are crosse-barred
with his execration. Also I shooke
my lap, and said, so God shake
out every man from his house,
and from his labour that per-
formeth not this promise, even thus be
be shaken out, and emptied; and all the
Congregation said, Amen. A promise,
an oath, a curse, are passed vpon
this act; now, no Israelite dares
falter in the execution: When
we haue a sin in chace, it is good
to follow it home, not slackning
our pursuit till we haue fully pre-
uailed; and when it is once falne
vnder our hands, we cannot kill
it too much.

Now Nehemiah having thus
happily delivered his people fro
a domesticall captiuitie, comméds
his seruice to the gracious remu-
neration

of the Almighty; Thinke vpon me my God, for good, according to all that I haue done for this people. Therefore doth hee refuseth the bread of the Gouernour, that hee may receiue the reward of the Gouernour of heauen: Had hee taken a temporary recompence, both he and it had beeene forgotten, now he hath made an happy change for eternity. Not that he pleades his merit, but sues for mercy; neither doth he pray to bee remembred for his worke, but according to his worke.

Our good deedes as they are well accepted of God, so they shall not goe vnrewarded; and what God will giue, why may not wee craue. Doubtlesse, as we may offer vp our honest obe-

E e 2 diences

diances ynto God, so we may expect and beg his promised rettibutions; not out of a proud conceit of the worth of our earnings, who at the best are no other then vnprofitable seruants; but out of a faithfull dependance vpon his pact of bountie, who cannot bee lesse then his word : O God, if we doe ought that is good, it is thine act, and not ours ; crowne thine owne worke in vs, and take thou the glory of thine own mercies.

Whiles *Nehemiah* is busie in reforming abuses, at home; the enemy is plotting against him, abroad; *Sanballat*, and *Tobiab*, and *Geshem* the *Arabian* conspire against his life, and in him, against the peace of *Jerusalem*: What open hosti-

hostility could not do, they hope to effect by pretence of treaties : Four severall messages call *Nebemiah* to a friendly meeting. Distrust is a sure gard. The wise gouernor hath learn'd to suspect the hollow fauours of an enemy; and to returne them, with safe and iust excuses. *I cannot come downe,* why should the worke cease whiles I leave it, and come downe to you? I doe not heare him say, You intend mischiche to mee, I will not come forth to you, though this were the proper cause of his forbearance, but he hee turnes them off with an answer, that had as much truthe, as reseruednesse. Fraud is the fidiest answered with subtlety: Euen innocencie is allowed a lawfull craft. That

E e 3 man

man is in a greeble case, that conceales no truth from an aduersary.

What intreates I cannot doe,
Shall bee attempted by threats;
Samballat's seruant comes now the
fifth tyme, with an open letter,
imporring dangerous intimation,
whereto is written, It is reported
among the heathen and *Gashmū* saith
it, that the *Leues* think to rebell; for
which cause thou buildest the wall that
thou mayest be their King; id is not
parted: and what falleblood may
not pleue this warrant? What can
braverē bytig digne report? among
the heathen: and who is more
Exhickathen *Samballat*? what sin
can be worse then to mangle
Idolaters? And *Gashmū* is amiss;
Aske my fellowe chesep! this *Ara-*
bic was one of those three heads

of all the hostile combination, against *Ierusalem*, against *Nehemiah*; it would be wide with innocence if enemies might bee allowyd to accuse it but quicke bad reuision

That the Jewes shinke to rebell:
A stale suggestion; but, once, powerfull; Malice hath leavn'd to miscall all actions; where the hands cannot bee taxed, very thoughts are preiudged: *For which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their King;* Hee was never true *Israelite* that hath not passed spightfull slanders, and misconstruactions: Artaxerxes knew his seruant too well, to beleue any rumour, that should haue beeene so shamelesse; The ambition of *Nehemiah* was wel known to reach onely to the cup, not to

E c 4 the

the Scepter of his Soueraign: And yet to make vp a sound tale, Prophets are suborned to preacb, There is a King in Iudah : as if that loyall gouernor had corrupted the pulpits also, and had taught them the language of treason.

But what of all this? what if some false tongue haue whispered such idle tales? It is not safe for thee, O Nehemiah, to contemn report: Perhaps this newes shal fly to the Court, and worke thee a deadly displeasure ere thou canst know thy selfe traduced; Come therefore, and let vs take counsell together: Surely that man cannot be sparing of any thing, that is prodigall of his reputation. If ought vnder heauen can fetch Nehemiah out of his hold, it is the care

care of his fame. But, that wary
gouvernour sees a net spred neare
vnto this stall; and therefore keeps
aloofe, not without contempt of
those sly deuises. *There are no such
things done as thou sayest, but thou
fairst them out of thine owne heart;*
Some imputations are best an-
swered with a neglectiuе deniall:
It falleth out often, that plaine dea-
ling puts craft out of countenance.
Since neither force nor fraud
can kill Nehemiah, they will now
try to draw him into a sinne, and
thereby into a reproach; O [God]
that any Prophets tongue should
be mercenary! Shemaiah the Seer
is hyred by Tobiab, and Sanballat,
to affright the Gouvernour, with
the noyse of his intended mur-
der; and to aduise him for shel-
ter,

ter, to flye to the forbidden refuge of the Temple. The colour was faire. Violence is meant to thy person; no place but one can promise thee safetie; The City hath as yet no gates; come therefore, and shut thy selfe vp in the Temple; there onely shalt thou be free from all assaults.

And what if Nehemiah had harkened to this counsell? Sinne, and shame had followed. That holy place was for none but persons facted; such as were privileged by blood, and function; others shold presume, and offend in entring; and now, what would the people say? What shall become of vs whiles our Gouvernour hides his head for feare? When shall wee finde a

Tem-

Temple to feare vs what
doe wee depending vpon a co-
wardly leader? Go to iust
Well did Nehemiah forecast
these circumstances, both of fact,
and euency; and therefore resol-
uing to distrust a Prophet that
perswaded him to the violation
of a Law, hee reiects the motion
with scorne; *Should such a man*
~~as I flee?~~ *Should I goe into the Tem-*
~~ple to faue my life?~~ *I will not goe:*
It is fit for great persons to stand
vpon the honour of their places;
Their very stations should put
those spirits into them, that
should make them hate to stoope
vnto base conditions.

Had God sent this message,
wee know hee hath power to
dispence with his owne Lawes;
but

but well might the contradiction
of a Law argue the message not
sent of God. God as he is one,
so doth hee perfectly agree with
himselfe. If any private spi-
rit crosse a written
word, let him or **be accursed.**

ANSWERVS

*A H A S V E R U S Feasting,
V A S H T I cast off,
E S T H E R chosen.*



Hat bounds can
be set to humane
ambition? *Aha-
suerus, that is, Xer-
xes, the sonne of
Darius* is already the King of an
hundred, and seuen and twenty
Prouinces, and now is ready to
fight for more. Hee hath newly
subdued Egypt, and is now ad-
dressing himself for the conquest
of *Greece*. Hee cannot hope euer
to

to see all the land that hee posses-
seth, and yet hee cannot be quiet,
whiles he heares of more. Less
then two ells of earth shall ere
long serue him, whom, for the
time, a whole world shall scarce
satisfie; In vaine shall a man
~~strive~~ to haue that which he can-
not inioy, and to inioy ought by
mere relation; It is a windy hap-
pinesse that is sought in the exag-
geration of those titles, which are
taken upon others credit, with-
out the sense of the owner: No-
thing can fill the heart of man, but
he that made it.

This great Monarch, partly in
triumph of the great victories,
that he hath lately wonne in E-
gypt, and partly, for the anima-
tion of his Princes, and souldiers,

to

to his future exploits, makes a feast, like himselfe, royall and magnificent.

What is greatnesse if it bee not shewed? And wherein can greatnesse bee better shoyne, then in the atcheiements of warre, and the entertainments of peace?

All other feasts were but hunger to this of *Ahasuerus*, whether we regard the number of guests, or the largenesse of preparation, or continuance of time: During the space of a whole halfe yeare, all the tables were sumptuously furnished for all commers from *India*, to *Ethyopia*; A world of meat was euery day dressed for a world of men; Euery meale was so set on, as if it should haue beeene the last: Yet all this long feast

feast hath an end; and all this glory is shut vp in forgetfulness; What is *Ahasuerus* the better, that his Peeres then said, hee was incomparably great? What are his Peeres the better, that they were feasted? Happy is he that eates bread, and drinke new wine in the Kingdome of God; this banquet is for eternity, without intermission, without satiety.

What variety of habits, of languages, of manners, met at the boards of *Ahasuerus*? What confluence of strange guests was there now to *Shushan*? And, lest the glory of this great King might seeme, like some coorse picture, only faire a farre off; after the Princes and Nobles of the remote Prouinces; all the people

of

of Shushan are entertained, for seuen daies with equall pompe and state; The spacious Court of the Palace is turned into a Royall Hall, the walls are rich hangings, the pillars of marble, the beds of siluer and gold, the pauement of porphirie curiously checkered; The wine and the vessels stroue whether should bee the richer; no man drunke in worse then gold; and whiles the metall was the farnie, the forme of each cup was diuers; the attendants was answerable to the cheare; and the freedome matched both: Here was no compulsion, either to the measure, or quality of the draught, euery mans rule was his owne choice. Who can but blush to see forced healths in Christian

F f ban-

banquets, when the ciuility of
very pagans commands liberty.

I cannot but envy the mode-
sty of heathen Dames; *Vashti* the
Queene, and her Ladies, with all
the severall rankes of that sexe,
feast apart; intretaining each o-
ther, with a bashfull curtesie,
without wantonnesse, without
that wild scurrility, which v-
seth to haunt promiscuous mee-
tings: Oh shamefull vnchastity
of those loose Christians, who
must feed their lust, whiles they
fill their bellies; and thinkē the
feast ynperfyt, where they may
not late their eye no lesse then
their palate.

The last day of this pompous
feast is now come: King *Aba-
suerus* is so much more cheerfull,

by how much his guests are nearer to their dismission. Euery one is wont to close vp his curtesie with so much more passion, as the last acts vse to make the deeper impression; And now, that he might at once amaze, and indeare the beholders, *Vashti* the Queene in all her royalty, is called for. Her sight shall shut vp the feast, that the Princes and people may say, How happy is King *Abasuerus*, not so much in this greatnesse, as in that beauty.

Seuen officers of the chamber are sent to cary the message, to attend her entrance, and are returned with a deniall: Perhaps *Vashti* thought, What meanes this vncoauth motion? More then six moneths high this feast con-

F f 2 tinued;

tinued; and, all this while wee
haue injoyed the wonted liberty
of our sexe; Were the King still
himselfe, this command could
not bee sent; it is the wine, and
not hee, that is guiltie of this er-
rand; Is it for mee to humour
him in so vaine a desire? Will it
agree with our modest reserved-
nesse, to offer our selues to bee ga-
zed at by millions of eyes? Who
knowes what wanton attempts
may follow vpon this vngouern-
ed excesse? This very message
argues that wit, and reason haue
yeelded their places to that besot-
ting liquor. Nothing but absence
can secure vs from some vnbe-
seeming profer; neither doubt
I, but the King when he returnes
to himselfe, will give me thankes
for

for so wise a forbearance.

Thus, vpon the conceit (as is likely) that her presence would bee either needless, or vnsafe. *Vashti* refuseth to come. Although perhaps her great spirits thought much to receiue a command frō the hand of officers.

The blood that is once inflamed with wine, is apt to boyle with rage: *Ahasuerus* is very wroth with this indigne repulse: It was the ostentation of his glory, and might, that hee affected, before those Princes, Peeres, people; and now that seemes eclipsed, in the shutting vp of all his magnificence, with the disgraceful affront of a woman. It vexes him to thinke, that those Nobles, whom hee meant to send away astoni-

shed with the admiration of his power, and majesty, should now day: What boots it *Ahasuerus* to rule afarre off, when hee cannot command at home? In vaine doth he boast to gouerne Kings, whiles hee is checked by a woman.

What ever were the intentions of *Vashti*, surely her disobedience was inexcusable; it is not for a good wife to iudge of her husbands will, but to execute it: neither wit, nor stomacke may carie her into a curious inquisition into the reasons of an enjoyned charge, much lesse to a resistance: but in an hood-winkt simplicity she must follow, whither shee is led; as one that holds her chiefe praise to consist in subiection.

Where

Where should the perfection
of wisedome dwell, if not in the
Courts of great Princes? or what
can the treasures of Monarchs
purchase more invaluabley preci-
ous, then learned and iudicious
attendance? Or who can be so
fit for honour as the wisest.

I doubt how *Ahasuerus* could
haue beeene so great, if his throne
had not beeene still compassed
with them that knew the times,
and vnderstood the law; and
judgement. These were his O-
racles in all his doubts: These are
now consulted in this difficulty;
neither must their aduice bee se-
cretly whispered, in the Kings
ear, but publikely deliuered in
the audience of all the Princes. It
is a perillous way that these sages

are called to goe, betwixt an husband and wife; especially of such power, and eminency ; yet Memucan feares not to passe an heauie sentence against Queen Vashti. *Vashti, the Queene hath not done wrong to the King onely, but also to all the Princes, and all the people, that are in all the Provinces of the King Ahasuerus.* A deepe and sore commination ; iniuries are so much more intolerable, as they are dilated vnto more ; those offences which are of narrow extent, may receive an easie satisfaction ; the amends are not possible, where the wrong is vniuersall : *For this deed of the Queene shall come abroad to all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes :* Indeed so publique a fact must needs fly;

That

That concourse gaue fit opportunity to diffuse it all the world ouer; The examples of the great are easily drawne into rules. Bad lessons are apt to be taken out; as honour, so contempt falleth downe from the head to the skirts; never ascends from the skirts to the head.

These wise men are so much the more sensible of this danger, as they saw it more likely, the case might prove their owne. Likewise shall the Ladies of Persia and Media say this day vnto all the Kings Princes. The first preecedents of euill must bee carefully auoided, if wee care to keepe a constant order in good. Prudence cannot better bestirre it selfe, then in keeping mischiefe from home.

The

The foundation of this doom of Memucan is not laid so deep for nothing; If it please the King let there goe a royall commandement from him, and let it bee written among the laws of the Persians, and Medians, that it bee not altered, that Vashti come no more before Ahasuerus; and let the King giue her royall estate to another that is better then she. How bold a word was this, and how hazardous? Had Ahasuerus more loued the beauty of Vashti, then his honor, Memucan had spoken this against his owne life! How-
soever, a Queene of so great spi-
rit, could not want strength of
faour, and faction, in the Persian
Court, which could not but take
fire at so desperate a motio. Paith-
full statesmen, overlooking pri-
uate

uate respects, must bend their eies
vpon publique dangers, labou-
ring to prevent a common mis-
chiefe, shough with the aduen-
ture of their oyng! Nature had
taught these Bagans the necessarie
of a female subiection; and the
hate and scotrie of a proud dis-
obedience. They haue allearned
the very dictates of Nature, that
can abide the head to iyes set be-
lowe the ribbes.
I cannot say but Kestell was
worthy of a sharpe censure; I can-
not say she was worthy a repudi-
ation. This plaister I drew too
hard; It was but heathen iustice
to punish the wifes disobedience
in one indifferent act, with a di-
uorce: Nothing but the violati-
on of the mariage-bed, can either
inde
breake,

breake, or vntye the knot of mariage. Had she not beene a Queen, had not that contemptuous act beeene publique, the sentence had not beeene so hard; now the punishment must be exemplary, lest the sin should be so. Many a one had smarted lesse, if their persons, if their places had beeene meaner. The King, the Princes approue this heavy judgment of Memucan; It is not in the power of the faire face of Vashti, to warrant her stomacke: No doubt many messages passed ere the rigour of this execution: That great hart knows not to relet, but will rather break, then yield to an humble deprecation. When the stone, and the steele meet, fire is stricken; it is a soft answer that appeaseth wrath.

Vashti

Vashti is cast off, Letters are sent from the King, into all his Provinces, to command that every man should rule at home; The Court affords the an awfull patterne of authority: Had not *Ahasuerus* doted much vpon *Vashties* beauty, hee had not called her forth at the feast, to be wōdredat, by his Peeres & people; yet now hee so feeles the wound of his reputation, that he forgets he euer felt any wound of his affection. Euen the greatest loue may be ouerstrained; It is not safe presuming vpon the deepest assurances of dearnesse: There is no heart that may not be estranged. It is not possible that great Princes should want soothing vp in all their inclinations, in all their actions:

ons : Whiles *Ahasuerus* is following the chace of his ambition, in the wars of *Greece*, his followers are prouiding for his lust at home. Nothing could sound more pleasing to a carnall care, then that all the faire yong virgins, throughout all his dominions, should be gathered into his palace at *Shushan*, for his assay, and choice : The decree is soone published ; The charge is committed to *Hegē*, the Kings Chamberlain, both of their purification , and ornaments.

What strife, what emulation was now, amongst all the *Persian* damosells, that either were, or thought themselves faire ? Every one hopes to bee a Queen ; and sees no reason why any other

ther should be thought more excellent; How happy were we, if we could be so ambitious of our espousfalls to the King of heauen?

Amongst all this throng of Virgins, God hath prouided a wife for *Ahasuerus*; hauing determined his choice, where most aduantage shall rise to his forlorne people.

The *Iewes* were miserably scattered ouer the world, in that wofull deportation vnder *Iechoniah*; scarce an handfull of them returned to *Ierusalem*; the rest remaine still dispersed where they may but haue leaue to liue. There are many thousands of them turned ouer with the *Babylonian* Monarchy, to the *Persian*; amogst the rest, was *Mordecai*, the sonne of

of *Iair*, of the tribe of *Beniamin*; a man of no meane note, or ability; who, liuing in *Shushan*, had brought vp *Hadassah*, or *Esther*, his vncles daughter, in a liberall fashion; It was happy for this orphane, that in a region of captiuity, shée light into such good hands; Her wise kinsman finds it fit, that her breeding, and habit shold be *Persian*-like; In outward and ciuill formes, there was no need to vary from the heathen; her religion must bee her owne; the rest was so altogether theirs, that her very nation was not discerned.

The same God that had giuen incomparable beauty to this *Levesse*, gaue her also fauor in the eyes of *Hegai*, the keeper of the wo-

women; Shee is not only taken into the *Persian Court*, as one of the selected virgins, but obserued with more then ordinary respect; all necessaries for her speedie purification are brought to her; Seven maides are allowed for her attendance, and the best & most honorable place in that Seraglio is allotted to her; As if this great officer had designed her for a Queene, before the choice of his master.

What strange preparation was here for the impure bed of an heathen? Euery Virgin must be sixe moneths purified with oyle of myrrhe, and six other months perfumed with sweet odors, besides those speciall receits, that were allowed to each, vpon their

G g owne

owne election: O God, what care, what cost is requisite to that soule which should be addteffed a fit Bride for thine holy and glorious Maiesty?

When wee haue scoured our selues with the most cleansing oyle of our repentance, and haue perfumed our selues with thy best graces, and our perfectest obediency, it is the onely praise of thy mercy, that we may bee accepted.

The other Virgins passed their probation, vnregarded; when Esther's turne came, though shee required nothing, but tooke what was given her; though she affected nothing, but brought that face, that demeanure, which nature had cast vpon her, no eye sees

sees her without admiration; the King takes such pleasure in her beauty, that, contemning all the other vulgar formes, his choyce is fully fixed vpon her; All things must prosper, where God hath intended the successe: the most wise prouidence of the Almighty fetches his projects from farre; The preseruation and aduantage of his owne people is in hand; for the contriuing of this, *Vashti* shall be abandoned; the virgins shall be chosen; *Ester* only shall please *Ahasuerus*; *Mordetai* shall displease *Haman*; *Hams* ruine shall raise *Mordecas*: The purposes of God cannot be iudged by his remote actions; only the accomplishement shewes his desigues; In the meane time, it pleaseth him to

Gg 2 looke

looke another way, then hee
moues; and to worke his owne
ends, by arbitrary, and vnlikely
accidents.

None but *Esther* shall succeed
Vashti; she onely caries the heart
of *Ahasuerus* from all her sexe; The
royall Crowne is set vpon her
head; And, as *Vashti* was cast off
at a feast, so, with a solemne feast
shall *Esther* bee espoused; Here
h wanted no triumph, to expresse
the ioy of this great Bridegroom;
and that the world might wit-
nesse he could be no lesse louing,
then feuere, all his Prouinces shal
feele the pleasure of this happy
match, in their immunitiess, in
their rich gifts.

With what enuious eyes doe
we thinke *Vashti* lookt vpon her
glori-

glorious riuall? How doth shee now (though too late) secretly chide her peevish will, that had thus stript her of her royal crowne, and made way for a more happy successor? Little did shee thinkē her refusall could haue had so hainous a construction: Little did shee feare, that one word (perhaps not ill meant) should haue forfeited her husband, her crowne, and all that shee was. Who so is not wise enough to forecast the danger of an offence, or indiscretion, may haue leasure enough of an vnseasonable repentance.

That minde is truly great and noble, that is not changed with the hyest prosperity; Queen Esther cannot forget her cozen Mordecai; No pompe can make her sleight

G g 3 the

the charge of so deare a kinsman :
In all her royalty, she casts her eie
vpon him, amongst the throng
of beholders, but shee must not
know him ; her obedience keeps
her in awe, and will not suffer
herto draw him vp with her, to
the participation of her honor ; It
troubles her, not a little, to for-
bear this duty ; but shee must ;
It is enough for her, that Morde-
cai hath commanded her not to
be ackowne, w^{ch}o, or whose
she was.

Perhaps the wise Ievv feared,
that whiles her honour was yet
greene, and vnsettled, the notice
of her nation, and the name of a
despised captiue might bee some
blemish to her in that proud
Court; when as afterwards, vpon

the

the merit of her cariage, and the full possession of all harts, her name might dignifie her nation, and countermand all reproches

Mordecai was an officer in the Court of *Abasuerus*; his seruice called him daily to attend in the Kings gate; Much better might he, being a lew, serue a Pagan Master, than his foster-daughter might ascend to a Pagans bed.

If the necessity or conuenience of his occasions called him to serue; his pietie and religion calld him to faithfulness in his seruice: Two of the Kings Chamberlaines, *Bigthana*, and *Tereph*, conspire against the life of their Soueraine. No greatnesse can secure from trecherie, or violence: Hee that ruled ouer millions of

Gg4 men

men, through an hundred, and seuen and twenty Prouinces, can-
not assure himselfe from the hand
of a villaine; He that had the po-
wer of other mens liues, is in dan-
ger of his owne. Happy is that
man, that is once possessed of a
crown incorruptible, vnfadable,
reserved for him in heauen: no
force, no treason can reach thi-
ther, there can be no perill of ei-
ther violence, or forfeiture.

The likeliest defence of the
person of any Prince, is the fideli-
ty of his attendants: Mordecai ou-
uer-hears the whispering of these
wicked conspirators, and reueales
it to *Esther*; she (as glad of such
an opportunity to commend vnto
Abasuerus the loyalty of him
whom she durst but secretly ho-
nour)

nour) reueales it to the King; The circumstances are examined, the plot is discouered, the traytors executed, the service recorded, in the *Persian Annalls*. A good foundation is thus laid for *Mordecaies* aduancement, which yet is not ouer-hastened, on either part ; Worthy dispositions labour onely to deserue well, leauing the care of their remuneration, to them, whom it concernes ; It is fit that Gods leasure should be attended in all his designements ; The houre is set, when *Mordecais* shall bee raised : If in the meantime there be an interuention, not onely of neglect, but of feares, and dangers, all these shall make his honour so much more sweet, more precious.

HAMAN

**H A M A N disrespected by
M O R D E C A L.
M O R D E C A I S message
to E S T H E R.**

Esther 3.4.



Esides the charge of his office, the care of Esthers prosperity calls Mordecai to the Kings gate; and fixes him there: With what inward contentment did he thinke of his so royall pupill? Here I sit among my fellowes; little doth the world thinke, that mine adopted child sits in the Throne of Persia: that the great Em-

ZAKARI

Emprise of the world owes her selfe to me; I might haue more honor, I could not haue so much secret comfort, if al Shusban knew what interest I haue in Queene Ester.

Whiles his hart is taken vp with these thoughts, who should come ruffling by him, but the newv-raised fauorite of King Ahasuerus, Haman the sonne of Ammedatha the Agagite? Him hath the great King unexpectedly aduanced, and set his seat abouie all the Princes that were with him: The gracious respects of Princes are not alwayes led by merit, but by their owne will; which is euer affected to bee so much the freer, as themselues would bee held more great.

When

When the Sunne shines vpon
the Diall, every passenger will be
looking at it. There needed no
command of reverence, where
Ahasuerus was pleased to counte-
nance; All knees will bow alone
euent to forbidden Idols of ho-
nor; how much more where
royall authority inioynes obey-
fance? All the seruants, all the
subiects of King *Ahasuerus* are
willingly prostrate before this
great mignon of their Souerayn;
onely *Mordecai* stands stiffe, as if
he saw nothing more then a man
in that proud *Agagite*.

They are not obserued that do
as the most; but if any one man
shall vary from the multitude, all
eyes are turned vpon him: *Mor-
decaies* fellow-officers note this
pal-

palpable irreuerence, and expostulate it; *Why transgresseſt thou the Kings commandementſ?*
Considerest thou not how far this affront teacheth? It is not the person of *Haman*, whom thou refusest to adore, but the King in him: Neither doe we regard so much the man, as the command; Let him be never ſo vile whom the King bids to bee honoured, with what safety can a ſubiect examine the charge, or reſiſt it? his vnworthinesſe cannot diſpence with our loyaltie.

What a dangerous wilfulnesſe ſhould it be to incurre the forfaiture of thy place, of thy life for a curteſie? If thou wilt not bow with others, expect to ſuffer alone; Perhaps (they thought) this

this omission was vnheedy; In
a case of ignorance, or Incogitancie, it was a friendly office to ad-
monish; the sight of the error
had beene the remedy.

Mordecai heares their challenge,
their advice; and thinks good to
answer both, with silence; as wil-
ling they should imagine, his in-
flexibleness proceeded from a
resolution; and that resolution
from some secret grounds, which
he needed not impart: at last yet
he imparts thus much: Let it
suffice, that I am a Jew, and Ha-
man an Amalekite.

After a priuate expostulation,
the continuance of that open
neglect is construed for a sullen
obstinacie; and now, the moni-
tors therethrough grow sensible of
the

the contempt : Men are commonly impatient to lose the thanke of their indeuours, and are prone to hate vvhom they cannot reforme. Partly therfore to picke a thanke, and partly to reuenge this contumacy, these officers tufne informers against *Mordecai*, neither meant to make the matter fairer then it was; they tell *Haman* how proud, and stubborne a Jew sate amongst them, how ill they could brooke so sauie an affront to be offered to his greatnessse; how seriously they had expostulated, howv stomachfully the offender persisted ; and beleech him , that he would bee pleased in his next passage, to cast some glances that way, and but obserue the fashion of that intollerable

lerable insolency. The proud Agagite cannot long endure the very expectation of such an indignity; On purpose doth he stalk thither, with higher then his ordinary steps; snuffing vp the aire, as he goes, and would see the man, that durst deny reverence to the greatest Prince of *Perſia*. Mordecai holds his bold posture; onely hee is so much more careleſſe, as hee sees Haman more disdainfull, and imperious; neither of them goes about to hide his passion; one lookt, as if hee said, I hate the pride of Haman; the other lookt, as if he said, I will plague the contempt of Mordecai: how did the eies of Haman sparkle with fury; and as it were darted out

out deadly beames in the face of
that despightfull Lew? How did
he swell with indignation; and
then againe waxe pale with an-
ger? shortly, his very brow and
his motion bad Mordecai looke
for the vtmost of reuenge.

Mordecai foresees his danger,
and contemnes it; no frownes,
no threats can souple thole ioints:
he may breake, he will not bow.

What shall we say then to this
obfirmed resolution of Mordecai?
What is it, what can it be, that so
stiffens the knees of Mordecai, that
death is more easie to him, then
their incuruation? Certainly, if
meere ciuility were in question,
this wilfull irreuerendesse so great
a Peere, could not passe without
the iust censure of a rude perver-
ses;

H h nesse;

nesse; It is religion that forbids this obeisance, & tells him, that such curtesie could not bee free from sinne; Whether it were, that more then humane honor was required to this new-erected image of the great King, as the Persians were euer wont to bee noted for too much lauishnesse in these courtly deuotions: Or whether it were, that the ancient curse wherewith God had branded the blood, and stocke of Haman, made it vnlawfull for an Israelite to giue him any obseruance: For the Amalekites (of whose royall line Haman was descended) were the nation, with which God had sworne perpetuall hostility; and whose memory hee had straitly charged his people to root out, from vnder

EX. 17. 16.
Deu. 25. 19

der heauen; How may I (thinks he) adore, where God commāds me to detest? How may I profess respect, where God profelseth enmity? How may I contribute to the establishment of that seed vpon earth, which God hath charged to be pull'd vp from vnder heauen? Outward actions of indifference, when once they are felt to trench vpon the conscience, lay deepe obligations vpon the soule; euен whiles they are most sleighted by carelesse hearts. •

In what a flame of wwrath doth *Haman* liue this while? wherewith he could not but haue consumed his owne heart, had hee not giuen vent to that rage in his assured purposes of reuenge:

Hh 2 Great

Great mens anger is like to themselves, strong, fierce, ambitious of an excessive satisfaction. *Haman* scornes to take vp with the blood of *Mordecai*; This were but a vulgar amends; Poore men can kill where they hate, and expiate their owne wrong, with the life of a single enemie: *Hamans* fury shall fly an higher pitch; Millions of threats are few enow to bleed for this offence: It is a *Iew* that hath despighted him; all the whole nation of the *Iewes* shall perish for the stomach of this one: The Monarchy of the world was now in the hand of the *Persian*, as *Indea* was within this compasse, so there was scarce a *Iew* upon earth, without the verge of the *Persian* dominions:

ons? The generation, the name
shall now dye at once; Neither
shall there bee any memory of
them, but this; There was a peo-
ple, which having beeene famous
through the world, for three
thousand, foure hundred, and
fouriescore yeares, were in a mo-
ment, extinct by the power of
Haman for default of a courtesie.

Perhaps, that hereditary grudge,
and old antipathy, that was be-
twixt Israel, and Amalek, stucke
still in the heart of this Agagite, he
might know that God had com-
manded Israel to root out Amalek
from under heauen; and now
therefore an Amalekite will bee
ready to take this aduantage against
Israel. It is extreame infiſtice to
dilate the punishment beyond

Hh 3 the

the offence; and to enwrap thou-
sands of innocents within the
trespass of one: How many that
were yet vnborne when Haman
was vnscouted, must rce the fact
they liued not to know? How
many trillions of Iesu's were then
living, that knew not there was
a Mordecai? all of them are fetcht
into one condicion, and must
suffer, ere they can know their of-
fence. Oh the infinite distance be-
twixt the vniust cruelty of men,
and the iust mercies of the Al-
mighty; Even Caiphas himself
could say, It is better that one man
dye, then that all the people should per-
ish; and here Haman can say, It is
better that all the people should perish
then that one man should dye. Thy
mercy, o God, by the willing
death

death of one that had not sinned, hath defrayed the just death of a world of sinners : Whiles the injurious rigour of a man, for the supposed fault of one, would destroy a whole nation, that had not offended : It is true, that by the sinne of one, death raigned ouer all; but it was, because all sinned in that one: had not all men beeene in *Adam*, all had not falne i[n] him, all had not dyed in him; he was not the man, but mankind that fell into sinne, and by sinne, into death : No man can complainie of punishment, whiles no man can exempt himselfe from the transgression : Vnmercifull *Haman* would haue imbruied his hands in that blood, wch hee could not but confessse innocent.

node

H h 4

It

It is a rare thing, if the height
of fatall cause not presumption;
Such is Hamans greatness, that he
takes his designe for granted, ere
it can receive a motion; The
first dayes for this great massacre,
are determined by the lots of their
common divination, according
whereto, Haman chooseth the
houre of this bloody fift yere
now, waited on by opportunity,
he addresseth himselfe to King
Iahuerus. There is a certaine people
scattered abroad, and dispersed among
the peoples, in all the provinces of the
Kingdome, and their lawes are alien
from all people, neither keepe they the
Kingdaunes, therefore it is not for the
King profit to suffer them. If it please
the King, let it be written that they
may be destroyed, and I will pay tenne
thou-

thousand talents of siluer to the hands
of the officers. With what cunning
hath this man couched his ma-
lice? He doth not say, There is a
lew that hath affronted mee; let
me be alenged of his nation; this
raconte was too monstrous to be
confessed; perhaps this suggestion
might have bred in the mind
of Ahasuerus a conceit of Hamans
illnature and intolerable imma-
nity; but his pretences are implau-
sible; and such as drive at noth-
ing; then the publique good; for
envy wch hath this confirmation in
him self attenched people; were the na-
tion intire, their emaintenance
could not but stand with the
Kings honour; but now since
they are but straglers; as their losse
would be insensible; for their con-
tinu-

tinuance, and mixture cannot but
be prejudiciale. It was not the
fault, it was the misery of these
poore Jewes, that they were dis-
persed; and now their dispersion
is made an argument of their ex-
tirpation; therefore must they be
destroyed from the earth, because
they were scattered over the earth.
As good, so evill draw on each o-
ther, That which should plead
for pity in the well-affected, is a
motive to ingratitude in base
minds. Seldome overhath extre-
mity of mischiefe seized, where
earthen afflictions haue not beene
billeded before.

All faithfull Jewes had wroght to
say unto God, Hane mercy upon
us, O God, and save us, for our soule
is full of contempt; and we are scatter-
red

red amongst the heathen ; and here this enemy can say of them to Ahasuerus, *Destroy them for they are scattered ; Root them out, for they are contemned ; How much better is it to fall into the hands of God, than of men ; since that which whets the sword of men, works commiseration in the Almighty ?* Besides the dissipation of the persons, *Their lawes are diuers from all people ;* All other people live by thy lawes ; they onely by their owne : and how can this singularity of their fashions, but breed disorder, and inconuenience ? Did they live in some corner of the earth apart, their difference in religion and gouernment could not import much ; now, that they are dispersed amongst all thy
sub-

subiects, vwhat doe these yncouth
formes of theirs, but teach all the
world to bee irregular & vwhy
should they liue vnder thy pro-
tection, that will not be gouerned
by thy lawes? O my Iust God, I am
Wicked Haman! vwhat were
the lawes of Israel, but the lawes
of God? if this bee a quarrell, what
shall the death of the Jewes bee o-
ther, then martyrdome? And so
The diversity of judgement,
and practice from the rest of the
world hath beeene an old, and en-
tious imputation cast vpoo Gods
Church. What is hee be singled
from others, whiles wee walke
with God? In matters lawfull,
arbitrary, indifferent, wisedome
teacheth vs to conforme our
selues to all others; but, where
God

God hath laid a speciall impositi-
on vpon vs, we must either vary,
or sinne : The greatest glory of
Israel was their lawes, wherein
they as far exceeded all other na-
tions, as heauen is aboue earth ;
yet, here their lawes are quarrel-
led, and are made the induce-
ments of their destruction ; It is
not possible the Church of God
should escape persecution, whiles
that which it hath good is ma-
ligned ; whiles that offends which
makes it happy.

Yet, that they haue lawes of
their owne, were not so vnsuffi-
cient, if withall, they did obserue
thine, o King, but these *Jewes*, as
they are vnonformable ; so they
are seditious : *They keepe not the*
King lawes: Thou slanderest *Ha-*
man;

man; they could not keepe their owne lawes, if they kept not the Kings; for their lawes call them to obedience vnto their soueraignes; and adiudge hell to the rebellious: In all those hundred and seuen and twenty prouinces, King *Ahasuerus* hath no subiects, but them; They obey out of conscience, others out of feare: why are they charged with that, which they doe most abhorre? What can be the ground of this crimination? *Ahasuerus* commanded all knees to bow to *Haman*; A *Jew* onely refuses; Malicious *Haman*; He that refused to bow vnto thee, had sufficiently approued his loyalty to *Ahasuerus*; *Ahasuerus* had not been, if *Mordecai* had not beeene a good subiect; Hath the King

King no lawes, but what concerne thine adoration? Set aside religion (wherein the Jew is ready to present if not active, yet passive obedience) and name that Persian law, which a Jew dares break.

As I neuet yet read, or heard of a confcionable Israelite, that hath not passed vnder this calumniatiōn, so I cannot yeeld him a true Israelite, that deserues it.

In vaine doth hee professe to acknowledge a God, in heauen, that denies homage to his deputy on earth.

It is not for the Kings profit to suffer them. Worldly hearts are not led by good, or euill; but by profit, or losse; neither haue they grace to know that nothing is profitable but what is honest, nothing so

soodesperately incommodious, as
wikkednesse; They must needs
offend by rule that measure all
things by profit, & measure pro-
fit by their imagination. How
easie is it to suggest strange vn-
truths, when there is no body to
giue an answer? False Hamā, hovv
is it not for the Kings profit to
suffer the Iewes? If thou construe
this profit, for honor, The Kings
honor is in the multitude of sub-
iects, and what people more nu-
merous then they? If for gaine,
The Kings profit is in the large-
nesse of his Tributes ; and what
people are more deepe in their
payments? If for seruices?
what people are more offici-
ous? How can it stand with the
Kings profit to bereave himselfe
of

of subiects, his subiects of their liues, his Exchequer of their tributes, his state of their defence? HEE is a weake polititian that knowes not to guild ouer the worst project, with a pretence of publike vtility. NO name vnder heauen hath made so many fooles, so many villaines, as this of profit.

Lastly, as *Ahasuerus* reapes nothing but disprofit by the liues of the Jewes, so hee shall reape no small profit by their deaths. I will pay tenne thousand talents of siluer to the Kings treasuries for this executiō. If reuenge were not very sweet to the malitious man, hee could not be content to purchase it at so high a rate; How doe we see daily that the thirst hereof car-

ries men to a riotous prodigality
of estate, body, soule ?

Cruell Haman, if thou couldst
haue swim'd in a whole Sea of
Iewish blood, if thou couldst haue
raised mountaines of their carcas-
ses, if thou couldst haue made all
Perisia thy shambles, who would
haue giuen thee one farthing for
all those piles of flesh, for all those
streames of blood ? yea who
would not rather haue beeene at
charge for the auoyding of she
annoyances of those slaughtered
bodies, which thou offerest to
buy at ten thousand talents ? It
were an happy thing, if charite
could enlarge it selfe, but so much
as malice, if the preseruation of
mankinde could be so much be-
holden to our bountie, as this de-
struction.

Now

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Now when all these are laid together, the basenesse and dispersednesse of the people, the diversitie of their lawes, the irregulartie of their gouernment, the rebellion of their practice, the inconuenience of their toleration, the gaine of their extirpation; what could the wit or art of man devise more insinuative, more likely to perswade? How could it bee but *Ahasuerus* must needs thinke (since he could not suspect the ground of this suit,) What a zealous patriot hane I raised that can be content to buy off the incommodity of the state, at his own charge? How worthy is he rather of the aide both of my power, and purse? why shoulde I be fed no ease in my Kingdome of

rebels: The siluer is giuen to thee,
the people also, to doe with them as
seemeth good to thee: Without all
delay, the secretaries are call'd to
write the warrants, the Kings
ring is giuen to seale them, the
posts are sent out to cary them im-
to all Prouinces; The day is set
wherin all Jewes, of all ages, of
both sexes, through the hundred
and seven and twenty provinces
of the King, shall be sacrificed to
the wrath of Haman.

In all the carriage of Absuerus,
who sees not too much heiddi-
nesse of passion? Hasty is cast off
for a while, the Jews are giuen to
the slaughter for nothing, his rage
in the one, his sorrow in the other
is to be impotent: He is now a
wretched husband the man King the

bare word of *Haman* is enough to kill so many subiects : No disposition can bee more dangerous in great persons, then violence of affectiō mixed with credulity. Oh the seeming inequality of humane condicions : *The King and Haman sat down to drink, but the City of Sushan was perplexed :* It is a wofull thing to see great ones quaffe the teares of the oppressed, & to heare them make musick of shriekes.

With what lamentation doe we thinke all the Synagogues of Iudea through the world receiued this fatall message of their proclaimed destruction ? How doe they beweare themselues, each to other ? How doe their conioyned cries fill heauen, and earth ? But above all, what sack-cloth and bushell, won I in sound blashēes

ashes could suffice wofull Mordecai, that found in himselfe the occasion of all this slaughter? What soule could bee capable of more bitterness, then he felte? Whiles he could not but think, Wretched man that I am; It is I, that haue brought all this calamity vpon my nation; It is I, that haue beeene the ruine of my people: wo is me that euer I put my selfe into the Court, into the seruice of a Pagan; how vnhappy was I to cast my selfe into these straits; that I must either honour an Agagite, or draw a vengeance vpon Israel? Yet how could I imagine, that the flame of Hamans rage would haue broken out so farre? might that reuenge haue determined in my blood, how happy shold I haue beene? now, I haue

brought death vpon many thousands of innocents, that cannot know wherefore they dye ; Why did I not hide my selfe rather frō the face of that proud *Amalekite* ? Why did I stand out in contestation with so ouer-powerfull an enemy ? Alas, no man of *Israel* shall so much as liue to curse me, onely mine enemies shall record my name, with ignominy, and say, *Mordecai* was the bane of his nation. Oh, that my zeale should haue reserved mee for so heauie a seruice ! Where now are thosē vaine ambitions, wherewith I pleased my selfe in this great march of *Ester* ? How fondly did I hope by this vndue meanes to raise my selfe, and my people ? Yea, is not this carnall presumpti-

on the quarrell that God hath against me? Doe I not therefore smart from these Pagans, for that I secretly affected this vncircumcised alliance? Howsoeuer it bee, yet, O God, what hauethy people done? Oh let it be thy iust mercy that I may perish alone!

In these sad thoughts did Mordecai spend his hart, vvhiles hee vwalked mournfully in sackcloth, before that gate, wherein he vvas wont to sit; now his habit bars his approach; no sackcloth might come vwithin the Court: Lo, that vwhich is vwelcomest in the court of heauen, is here excluded from the presence of this earthly royaltie: *A broken and a contrite hart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*

Neither did it a little adde to the

the sorrow of Mordecai, to heare
the bittēt insultations of his for-
mer monitors : Did wee not advise
thee better? Did we not foreadmonish
thee of thy danger ? see now the issue of
thine obstinacy : now see what it is
for thine earthen pitchet to knock
vwith brasse ? now, vwhere is the
man that vwould needs contest
vwith Haman? hast thou not now
brought thy matters to a fair pass?
Thy stomacke had long owed
thee a spight, and now it hath
paid thee; vwho can pitty thy wil-
fulness ? since thou vwouldest
needs deride our counsell, wwee
vvill take leauue to laugh at thy
sackcloth. Nothing but scornes,
and grieves, and terrors present
themselues to miserable Mordecai.
All the externall buffets of aduer-
saries

saries were sleight to the vvounds
that he both made, and felt in his
owne heart.

The perpetuall intelligences
that were closely held betwixt
Esther, and *Mordecai*, could not
suffer his publique sorrow to bee
long concealed from her; The
newes of his sackcloth afflicts her
ere she can suspect the cause; her
crownē doth but clog her head,
whiles shēe heares of his ashes;
True friendship transformes vs
into the condicion of those vvee
louē; and if it cannot raise them
to our cheerfulness, drawes vs
downe to their dejection: Faine
vvould shēe vncaſe her foster-fa-
ther of these mournfull vweeds;
and change his sackcloth for tis-
sue; that yet, at least, his cloathes
might

might not hinder his access to her presence, for the free opening of his grieves.

It is but a sleight sorrow that abides to take in outward comforts; Mordecai refuses that kinde offer; and vwould haue *Esther* see that his affliction was such, as that hee might well resolute to put off his sackcloth and his skin at once; that he must moueme to death rather then see her face to liue.

The good Queene is astonisht with this constāt humiliatiō of so deare a friend; and now she sends *Hatach*, a trusty (though a Pagan) attendant, to inquire into the occasion of this so irremediable heauineſſe: It shoulde seeme *Esther* inquired not greatly into matters of state; that which perplexed all

Shu-

Shushan, was not yet knowne to her; her followers, not knowing her to be a *Leveresse*, conceiued not how the newes might concerne her, and therefore had forborne the relation. *Mordecai* first informs her, by her messenger, of the decree that was gone out against all her nation, of the day wherein they must all prepare to bleed, of the summe which *Haman* had profered for their heads, & deliueres the copy of that bloody Edict, charging her, now, if euer, to bestirre her selfe; and to improue all her loue, all her power with King *Ahasuerus*, in a speedy and humble supplication for the saving of the life (not of himselfe so much, as) of her people.

It

to It was tydingsable to confound a weake heart, and hers so much the more, as shee could apprehend nothing but impossibility of redresse: she needs but to put Mordecai in mind of that, which all the Kings seruants and subiects knew well enough, that the Persian law made it no lesse then death for whom so ever, man or woman, that shalld preesse into the inner court of the king, uncallled: Nothing but their by all scoper extended, could keepe that pessimum diffunder from thence: For her, thirty dayes were stow past since shee was dalled in to the King, an intermission, that might lawfully be suspicous: Whether the heart of his first affection were thus soond (of it selfe) modi

selfe) allayed towards her; or whether some suggestions of a secret enemy (perhaps his Aggrieved) may haue set him off; or whether some more pleasing object may haue laid hold on his eyes; whatever it might be, this absence could not but argue some strangeness; and this strangeness must needs imply a danger in her bold intimation: She could bewaile therefore, she could not hope to remedy this dismal day of her people. This answere in the hearts of Mordecai sounded truthe, but doulenesse; neither can he take vp a wish so scabre a returne. Those occasions require other spincs, otherwise splintons, which must bee quibled by a more stinging reply: *Elinke me with thy selfe that thou*

thou shalt escape in the Kings house, more then all the Iewes. For if thou altogether boldest thy peace at this time, then shall their enlargement, & deliverance arise to the Iewes from another place, but thou and thy fathers house shall bee destroyed. And who knoweth whether thou art come to the Kingdome for such a time as this.

The expectation of death had not quailed the strong heart of faithfull Mordecai; even, whiles hee mournes, his zeale droupes not; there could haue beeene no life in that brest, which this mes-sage could not haue roused.

What then? is it death that thou fearest in this attempt of thy sup-plication; what other then death awaies thee in the neglect of it? there is but this difference, saue, & thou
shovv

thou maist die, sue not, and thou
must dye: what blood hast thou
but *Iewish*? and if these vnialtera-
ble edicts exempt no living soule,
what shall become of thine? and
canst thou be so vainly timorous,
as to die for feare of death? to pre-
ferre certaintie of danger, before
a possibility of hopes? Away
with this weake covayardise vn-
worthy of an *Israelite*, vnworthy
of a *Queene*: But if faint hear-
tednesse or private respects shall
seale vp thy lippes, or with-hold
thine hand from the ayde of thy
people; if thou canst so faire neg-
lect Gods Church, know thou
that God will not neglecte it; &
shall not be in the power of Ty-
rants to root out his choers feed;
that Holy one of *Israel* shall rather
wode

worke miracles from heauen, the
his inheritance shall perish vpon
earth? and how iust shall it then
be for that iealous God, to take
vengeance vpon thee, and thy fa-
thers house for this cold vnhelp-
fulness to his distressed Church?
Suffer me therefore to adiure thee
by all that tendernes of loue,
wherewith I haue trained vp
thine orphane infancie; by all
those deare and thankfull respects
which thou hast vowed to mee
againe; by the name of the God
of *Israel* whom wee serue, that
thou awaken and stirre vp thine
holy courage, and dare to aduen-
ture thy life, for the sauing of ma-
ny; It hath pleased the Almighty
to raise thee vp to that height
of honor, which our progenitors

Kk could

could little expect; why shouldest thou bee wanting to him, that hath beene so bountifull to thee? yea why should I not thinke that God hath put this very act into the intendement of thine exaltation? hauing on purpose thus seasonably hoysed thee vp to the throne, that thou maist rescue his poore Church from an vtter ruine?

Oh the admirable faith of Mordecai, that shines through all these cloudes, and in the thickest of these fogges, descries a cheerfull glimpse of deliueration; Hee saw the day of their common destruction enacted, he knew the Persian decrees to be vnalterable; but, withall; hee knew there was a Messias to come; he was so well

acquainted with Gods couenant assurances to his Church, that he can through the midst of those bloody resolutions foresee indemnity to *Israel*; rather trusting the promises of God, then the threats of men. This is the victory that overcomes all the feares, and fury of the world, euen our faith.

It is quarrell enough against any person, or community not to haue been aidfull to the distresses of Gods people. Not to ward the blow, if wee may, is construed for little better then striking. Till we haue tryed our vtmost, wee know not whether wyce haue done that we came for.

Mordecas hath said enough; These words haue so put a new

K k 2 life

life into *Esther*, that she is resolute to hazard the old; *Goe gather together all the Iewes that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eate nor drinke, three daies night or day; I also and my maidens will fast likewise, and so will I goe in vnto the King, (which is not according to the law) and if I perish, I perish.* Heroicall thoughts doe well befit great actions. Life can neuer be better aduentured, then where it shall be gaine to leesse it.

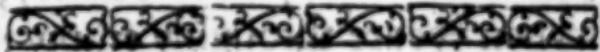
There can bee no law against the humble depreciation of euils; where the necessity of Gods Church calls to vs, no danger, should with-hold vs from all honest meanes of releife. Deepe humiliations must make way for the successe of great enterprises,

we

wee are most capable of mercy,
vwhen we are throughly empty :
A short hunger doth but whet
the appetite, but so long an absti-
nence meets death halfe way, to
preuent it; Well may they inioyne
sharp penances vnto others, who
practise it vpon themselues.

It was the face of *Esther* that
must hope to win *Ahasuerus*, yet
that shall be macerated with fast-
ing, that she may preuaile. A car-
nall heart would haue pampered
the flesh, that it might allure those
wanton eyes ; shee pines it, that
she may please.

God, and not she, must work
the hart of the King ; Faith tea-
ches her rather to trust her devo-
tions, then her beauty.

verses to old age from shadow


E S T H E R suing to A H A
 SV E R V S.

Esther. 5.



HE Iews are easily
 intreated to fast,
 who had received
 in themselves the
 sentence of death;
 what pleasure could they take in
 meat; that knew what day they
 must eat their last? The three
 dayes of abstinence are expired;
 now *Esther* changes her spirits,
 no lesse then her clothes; Who
 that sees that face, and that habit,
 can say she had mourned, she had
 fasted? Neuer did her royll
 parell

parell become her so well. That God before whom she had humbled her selfe, made her so much more beautifull, as she had beeene more dejected ; And now, with awinning confidence, she walks into the inner court of the King, and puts her selfe into that forbidden presence : as if she said ; Here I am with my life in my hand, if it please the King to take it, it is ready for him ; *Vashti*, my predecessor, forfated her place for not comming when she was called ; *Esther* shall now hazard the forfaiture of her life, for coming when she is not called. It is necessity, not disobedience that hath put me upon this bold approach ; according to thy construction, O King, I doe either live or

dye, either shall be welcome. The unexpectednesse of pleasing obiects makes them many times the more acceptable : the beautifull countenance , the gracefull demeanure, and goodly presence of *Esther*, haue no sooner taken the eyes; then they haue rauished the hart of King *Ahasuerus*: Long hath soone banished all dreadfulnesse ; And the King held out to *Esther* the golden scepter that was in his hand : Moderate intermission is so farre from eholing the affection, that it inflames it : had *Esther* beene seene euery day, perhaps that satiety had abated of the height of her welcome; now , three and thirty dayes retirednesse hath indeared her more to the surseted eyes of *Ahasuerus*.

Had

Had not the golden Scepter
been held out, where had Queen
Esther been? The Persian Kings
affected a stern awfulness to their
subjects; It was death to solicit
them, vncalled; How safe, how
easie, how happy a thing it is to
haue to doe with the King of
heauen, who is so pleased with
our accessio, that he solicits suitors,
who, as he is vnweariable wch:
our requests, so is infinite in his
beneficences!

How gladly doth *Esther* touch
the top of that Scepter, by which
shee holds her life? and now,
whiles she thinks it well that she
may liue, she receives besides par-
don, fauour: *What wilt thou Queene*
Esther, and what is thy request? it
shall be giuen thee, even to the halfe of
the

the Kingdome. Commonly, when wee feare most, wee speed best; God then most of all magnifies his bounty to vs, when we haue most afflicted our selues. Over-confident expectations are seldomie but disappointed, whiles humble suspicions goe laughing away: It was the benefit and safety of but one pecece of the Kingdome that *Ester* comes to sue for, and behold, *Ahasuerus* offers her the free power of the halfe: He that gave *Haman*, at the first word, the liues of all his Jewish subjects, is ready to givie *Ester* halfe his Kingdome, ere sheaske: Now shee is no lesse amazed at the louing munificence of *Ahasuerus*, then she was before afraid of his austerity; The Kings hart is in
the

the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; bee turneth it whithersoever hee will.

It is not good to swallow fauours too greedily, lest they either choke vs in the passage, or prove hard of digestion. The wise Queene, however shee might seeme to haue a faire opportunity offered to her suit, findes it not good to apprehend it too suddenly; as desiring by this small dilation, to prepare the eare and hart of the King for so important a request.

Now, all her petition ends in a banquet; If it seeme good vnto the King, let the King and Haman come this day vnto the banquet, that I haue prepared for him. It is an easie fauor to receiue a small courtesie, where

we offer to giue great. Haman is called, the King comes to *Esters* table; and now highly pleased with his entertainment, hee himselfe solicits her to propound that suit, for which her modesty would, but durst not solicit him: Bashfulness shall leese nothing at the hand of wel-gouerned greatness.

Yet still *Esters* suit stickes in her teeth, and dares not come forth without a further preface of time, and expectation; Another banquet must passe, ere this reckning can be giuen in. Other suitors wait long for the deliuerie of their petition; longer for the receit of their answere: Here the King is faine to wait for his suit: Whether *Esters* hart would not

not yet serue her to contest with so strong an aduersary, as *Haman*, without further recollection; or whether she desired to get better hold of the King, by indearing him with so pleasing entertainments; or whether shee would thus ripen her hopes, by working in the mind of king *Ahasuerus* a fore-conceit of the greatnessse, and difficulty of that suit, which was so loath to come forth; or, whether she meant thus to giue scope to the pride, and malice of *Haman*, for his more certaine ruine: Howsoeuer it were, to morrow is a new day, set for *Esthers* second banquet, & third petition.

The King is not inuited without *Haman*; Fauors are sometimes done to men, wth a purpose of dis-

displeasure; Doubtlesse *Haman* tasted of the same cates with his master; neither could hee in the forehead of *Esther* read any other characters, then of respect, and kind applause, yet had shee then, in her hopes, designed him to a iust reuenge. Little do we know, by outward carriages, in what termes we stand with either God or men.

Every little winde raiseth vp a bubble; How is *Haman* now exalted in himselfe with the singular grace of *Queene Esther*; and begins to value himselfe so much more, as hee sees himselfe higher in the rate of others opinion.

Only surly, and sullen *Mordecai* is an alloy to his happiness; No edict

edict of death can bow the knees
of that stout Jew: yea the notice
of that bloody cruelty of this Ag-
agite, haue stiffned them so much
the more: Before he lookt at Haman
as an Amalekite, now, as a
persecutor. Disdaine and anger
looke out at those eyes, and bid
that proud enemy doe his worst.
No doubt, Mordecai had beeene
listening after the speed of Queen
Esther; how shee came in to the
King, how shee was welcom'd
with the golden scepter, and with
the more precious words of Abasuerus;
how shee had intartained the King,
how shee pleased, the neyves had quit his sackcloth,
and raised his courage to a more
scornfull neglect of his professed
aduersary; tomorrow to iudge him

Haman

Haman comes home, I know not whether more full of pride, or of rage; calls an inward counsell of his choise friends, together with his wife; makes a glorious report of all his wealth, magnificence, height of fauor, both with the King and Queene; and at last, after all his sun-shine, sets in this cloudy epilogue, *Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the Kings gate.* It is seldome seene that God allowes euен to the greatest dearlings of the world, a perfect contentment; something they must haue to complaine of, that shall giue an vnsauory verdure to their sweetest morsels, and make their very felicity miserable.

The wit of women hath wont

to

to be noted for more sudden and more sharpe. *Zeresh* the wife of *Haman* sets on foot that motion of speedy reuenge, wwhich is applauded by the rest. *Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to morrow, speake thou to the King, that Mordecai may be hanged thereon; then goe thou in merily with the King, unto the banquet.* I doe not heare the say; Be patient a while, thou hast already set *Mordecai* his last day; the month *Adar* will not be long in comming; the determination of his death hath made him desperate, let him in the meane time eat his owne heart in envy at thy greatnessse; but they rather aduise of a quicke dispatch. Malice is a thing full of impatience, and hates delay of execution, next vn-

to mercy. Whiles any grudge lies at the heart, it cannot bee freelie cheerfull. Forced smiles are but the hypocrisie of mirth. How happy were it for vs, if we could be so zealously carefull to remoue the hindrances of our true spirituall ioy, those stubborne corruptions, that will not stoope to the power of grace.

MORDECAI

**M O R D E C A I . honored by
H A M A N .**

He wit of *Zeresh*
had like to haue
gone beyond the
wit of *Esther*; had
not the working
prouidence of the Almighty con-
trived these events, beyond all
hopes, all conceits, *Mordecai* had
beene dispatched, ere *Esther* secōd
banker. To morrow was the
day pitched for both their de-
signes; had not the stremme beene
unexpectedly turned, in vaine had
the Queene blamed her delayes;

Esther.6.

Ll 2 *Mordecaies*

Mordecaies breakfast had preuented *Esters* dinner : for certainly, hee that had giuen to *Haman* so many thousand liues, would neuer haue made dainty , vpon the same suit, to anticipate one of those, whom he had condemned to the slaughter : But, God meant better things to his Church , and fetches about all his holy purposes, after a wonderfull fashion, in the very instant of oportunity : *Hee that keepeth Israel, and neither slumbreth, nor sleepeth,* causeth sleepe to depart that night from him that had decreed to root out *Israel*. Great *Ahasuerus*, that commanded an hundred and seuen and twenty prouinces , cannot command an houres sleepe. Poverty is rather blessed with the free-

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freedome of rest, then wealth, and power : Cares and surfeitt vwith-hold that from the great, vwhich presseth vpon the spare diet, and labour of the meanest. Nothing is more tedious then an eager pursuit of denied sleepe : vwhich (like to a shadow) flyes away so much faster, as it is more followed: Experience tells vs, that this benefit is best solicited by neglect; and soonest found when we haue forgotten to seeke it.

Whether to deceipte the time, or to bestow it well ; Ahasuerus shall spend his restlesse houres in the Chronicles of his time. Nothing is more requisite for Princes, then to looke backe vpon their owne actions, and events, and those of their predecessors ;

The examination of fore-past actions makes them wise, of events, thankfull, and cautious. Amongst those voluminous registers of Acts & Monuments, which so many scores of provinces maketh needs yeeld, the booke shall open vpon Mordecaies discouery of the late treason of the two Eunuches: - the reader is turned thither, by an insensible sway of prouidence! Our most arbitrary or casuall actions are overruled by an hand in heauen.

The King now feeleth afresh the danger of that conspiracy, and (as great spirits abide not to another or bury good offices) inquires into the recompence of so loyall a service, What honour and dignity hath beeene done to Mordecai for this? Surely

Surely *Mordecai* did but his duty; he had hainously sinned, if hee had not revealed this wicked treachery; yet *Ahasuerus* takes thought for his remuneratio: How much more carefull art thou, o God of all mercies, to reward the weake obediences of thine (at the best) ynprofitable seruants?

That which was intended to procure rest, sets it off; King *Ahasuerus* is vnquiet in himselfe, to think that so great a merit shoulde lye, but so long, neglected; neither can hee find any peace in himselfe, till hee haue givuen order for a speedy retribution; heaving therefore by his seruants, that *Haman* was below in the Court, hee sends for him vp, to consult with him, *What should be done to the man*

whom the King delighteth to honour:
O maruellous concurrence of circumstancies, drawne together by the infinite vvisedome, and power of the Almighty: Who but *Haman* should be the man? And vwhen should *Haman* bee called to advise of *Mordecaies* honour, but in the very instant, vwhen hee came to sue for *Mordecaies* hanging? Had *Ahasuerus* but slept that night, *Mordecas* had beeene that morning aduanced fifty cubits higher then the earth, ere the king could haue remembred to vvhō he vvas beholder.

What shall vvee say then to reconcile these crosse-passions in *Ahasuerus*? Before he signed that decree of killing all the *Iewes*, hee could not but know that a *Iew* had

had saued his life ; and now, after that he hath enacted the slaughter of all *Iewes*, as rebels, he is giuing order to honour a *Iew*, as his preseruer. It were strange if great persons in the multitude of their distractions should not let fall some incongruities.

Yet, wyho can but think that king *Ahasuerus* meant vpon some second thoughts to make amends to *Mordecai*? neither can he chotise but pubthese two together ; The *Iewes* are appointed to death, at the suit of *Haman* ; This *Mordecai* is a *Iew* ; how then can I doe more grace to him , that hath saued my life, then to command him to be honored by that man, who wvould spill his ?

When *Haman* heard himselfe called

called vp to the bed-chamber of his master, he thinks himselfe too happy in soe early an oportunity of presenting his suit; but yet more in the pleasing question of *whether* he could not but imagine that favour forced it selfe vpon him with strange importunity; For how could hee conceive that any intention of more then ordinary honest could fall besides himselfe a. Selfe-doue like to a good stomache which gives to it selfe what nourishment it likes, and casts off that which offendes it. *Haman* will bee sure to bee no niggard in aduising those ceremonies of honour which he aduices meant to his owne person. Could hee haue ony cold dea-
med that this grace had been pur-
pos'd

posed to any vnder heauen, besides himselfe, he had not beeene so lauish in counselling so pom-
pous a shew of excessive magni-
ficence. Now the Kings owne
royall apparel; and his owne
Steed is not sufficient, except the
royall Crownd also make vp the
glost of him, who shall thus tri-
umph in the kings fauour. Yet all
this were nothing in base hands:
The actor shall be the best part of
this great pageant. *Loe this appa-
rell, and this horse, be deliuered to one
of the Kings most noble Princesses, that
they may array the man withall, whom
the King delighteth to honour, and
bring him on horsebacke through the
streets of the City, and proclaimme be-
fore him, Thus shall it be done to the
man whom the King delighteth to ho-
nour.*

nour. Honour is more in him that giues, then him that receives it: To be honoured by the vnworthy is little better then disgrace; No meaner person will serue to attend this *Agagite*, in his supposed greatness, then one of the noblest Princes. The ambition is too high flowing that seekes glory in the feruility of equals.

The place addes much to the act; There is small hart in a concealed honour; It is nothing vnlesse the streets of the city *Shushan* be wytnesses of this pompe, and ring with that gracious acclamation.

The vaine harts of proud men can easily devise those meanes, whereby they may best set out themselves. Oh that wee could equally

equally affect the meanes of true
and immortall glory. The heart
of man is neuer so cold within
him, as when from the height of
the expectation of good , it falls
into a sudden sense of euill: So did
this Agagites. Then the King sayd
to Haman, make hast, and take the
apparell , and the horſe, as thou hast
ſaid, and doe euens so to Mordecai the
Iew, that ſitteth at the Kings gate ;
Let nothing faille of all that thou haſt
ſaid. How was Haman thunder-
ſtricken with this killing word ?
Doe thou ſo to Mordecai ? I dare ſay
all the honors that Ahasuerus had
heaped vpon Haman , cannot
counteruaile this one vexation :
Doubtlesſe, at firſt, he diſtructs his
eare, and then muzes whether the
King be in earnest; at laſt, when
he

he heares the charge so seriously
doublod, and findes himselfe for-
ced to beleue it, hee beginnes to
thinke, What meanes this vncon-
ceiuable alteration? Is there no
man in all the Court of *Persia* to
bee pickt out for extraordinary
honor, but *Mordecai*? Is there no
man to bee pickt out for the per-
formance of this honour to him,
but *Haman*? haue I but one proud
enemie in all the world, and am I
singled out to grace him? Did it
gall me to the heart, and make all
my happiness tedious vnto mee,
to see that this *Lev* would not
bow to me, & must I now bow
to him? That which he would
rather dye, and forfait the life of
all his nation, then doe to mee,
notwithstanding the Kings com-
mand;

mand; shall I bee forced by the Kings command to doe vnto him? Yea, did hee refuse to give but a cap, and a knicke to my greatnesse; and must I lacquay so base a fellow through the streets, must I be his herald to proclaime his honour through all *Shushan*? Why doe I not let the King know the insolent affronts that hee hath offered me? Why doe I not signifie to my Soueraigne, that my errand now was for another kinde of aduancement to *Mordecas*? If I obtaine not my desired reuenge, yet, at least, I shall preuaile so far, as to exempt my selfe from this officious attendance vpon so unequall an enemy. And yet, that motion canot be now safe; I see the Kings heart is (vpon what ground
so

so euer) bent vpon this action ;
should I flye off neuer so little (af-
ter my word so directly passed)
perhaps my coldnesse, or opposi-
tion might be construed as some
wayward contestation with my
master : Especially, since the ser-
uice that *Mordecai* hath done to
the King, is of an higher nature,
then the despight which he hath
done to mee. I will, I must giue
way for the time ; mine humble
yeeldance, (when all the cariage
of this busynesse shall bee vnder-
derstood) shal (I doubt not) make
way for mine intended reuenge :
Mordecai, I will honor thee now,
that by these steps, I may ere long
raise thee many cubits higher. I
will obey the command of my
soueraigne in obseruing thee, that

he

he may reward the merit of my loyalty, in thine execution.

Thus resolued, *Hamah* goes forth, with a face and heart full of distraction, full of confusion; and addresses himselfe to the attorneying, to the attending of his old aduersary, and new master, *Mordecai*: What lookest doe we now think were cast vpō each other, at their first greeting? their eyes had not forgotten their old language; Certainly, when *Mordecai* saw *Haman* come into the roome where he was, he could not but thinke; This man hath long thirsted for my blood, and now hee comes to fetch it; I shall not liue to see the successse of *Ester*, or the fatall day of my nation? It was knowyne that morning in the

M m Court

Court, what a lofty gibbet Haman had provided for Mordecai; and why might it not haue come to Mordecaies care? What could he therefore now imagine other, then that he was called ouer to that execution? But, when he saw the royall robe that Haman brought to him, he thinks, Is it not enough for this man to kill mee, but he must mock mee too? What an addition is this to the former cruelty? thus to insult, and play vpon my last distresse? But, when he yet saw the royall crowne ready to be set on his head, and the Kings owne horse richly furnished at his gate, and found him selfe raised by Princeely hands, into that royall seat, he thinks, what may all this meane? Is it the pur-

pose of mine aduersary that I shal
dye in state? Would he haue me
hangd in triumph? At last, when
hee sees such a traine of *Persian*
Peeres attending him, with a
graue reuerence; and heares *Ha-*
man proclame before him, *This*
shall it bee done to the man whom the
King delighteth to honour; finding
this pompe to be serious, & well
meant, hee imagines (in all like-
lihood) that this unexpected chāge
proceeds from the suit of his *Eſt-*
er; now, he begins to lift vp his
head, and to hope well of him-
ſelfe, and his people, and could
not but say within himselfe, that
he had not fasted for nothing. O
the wondrous alteration that one
morning hath made in the court
of *Persia*; he that was yesternight

despised by *Hamans* footmen, is now waited on by *Haman*, and all his fellow-Princes; Hee that yester-night had the homage of all knees but one, and was ready to burst for the lacke of that, now doth obeysance to that one, by whom hee was wilfully neglected; It was not *Ahasuerus* that wrought this strange mutation, it was the ouer-ruling power of the Almighty, whose immediate hand would thus preuent *Esthers* suit, that he might challenge all the thanke to himselfe. Whiles Princes haue their owne wills, they must doe his, and shall either exalt, or deppresse according to diuine appointment.

I should commend *Hamans* obedience in his humble condif-

cent

cent to so vnpleasing, and harsh a command of his master, were it not, that either he durst doe no other, or that hee thus stoopt for an adiuantage. It is a thanklesse respect that is either forced, or for ends : True subiection is free and absolute; out of the conscience of duty, not out of feares, or hopes.

All Shushan is in an amaze at this sudden glory of *Mordecai*, and studies how to reconcile this day with the thirteenth of *Adar*; *Mordecai* had reason to hope well; It could not stand with the honour of the King, to kill him whom he saw cause to aduance; neither could this be any other, then the beginnig of a durable promotion; otherwise, what recompence

M m 3 had

had at houres riding beene to so
great a seruice ?

On the other side, *Haman*
droupes, and hath changed passi-
ons with *Mordecai*; Neither was
that *Iew* euer more deeply afflic-
ted with the decree of his owne
death, then this *Agagite* was with
that *Iewes* honour. How heavy
doth it lye at *Hamans* heart, that
no tongue, but his, might serue
to proclaim *Mordecai* happy:
Euen the greatest mignons of the
world must have their turnes of
sorrow.

With a couered head, and a de-
jected countenance, doth hee ha-
sten home, and longs to impart
his griefe, where he had receiu'd
his aduice: It was but cold com-
fort that hee finds from his wife

bad

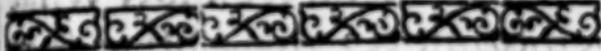
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Zeresh,

Zeresh, and his friends. If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begunne to fall, thou shalt not preuaile against him, but shalt surely fall before him. Out of the mouth of Pagans, O God, hast thou ordained strength, that thou maist still the enemy, and the auenget. What credit hath thy great name won with these barbarous nations, that they can out of all experience make maximes of chine vndoubted protection of thy people, and the certaine ruine of their aduersaries? Men finde no difference in them selfes, the face of a Jew lookes so like an heathens, that Esther and Mordecai were not (of long) taken for what they were: He that made them, makes the distinction betwixt

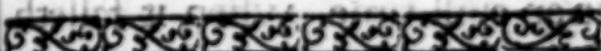
Mm 4 ' them;

them; so as a *Lew* may fall before
a *Persian*, &c get vp, and preuaile;
but if a *Persian* (or wholocuer of
the *Gentiles*) begin to fall before a
Lew, he can neither stay, nor rise:
There is an invisible hand of om-
nipotency that strikes in for his
owne, and confounds their op-
posites. O God, neither is thine
hand shamed, nor thy bowels
straitned in thee, thou art still and
cuer thy selfe; If wee be thy true
spirituall *Israel*, neither earth nor
hell shall preuaile against vs; we
shall either stand sure, or surely
rise, whiles our enemies shall lie
the dust.



H A M A N hanged.

M O R D E C A I aduanced.




*Haman's day is now
comme; That ven-
geāce which hath
hitherto slept, is
now awake, and
rouzed up it selfe to a just execu-
tion; That heauy morning was
but the preface to his last sorrow,
and the sad presage of his friends
is verified in the speaking; While
the word was in their mouthes,
the messengers were at the doore
to fetch Haman to his funerall-
banquet.*

Esther 7.3.

How

Eccles 9.12

How little do we know what
is towards vs ? As the fishes that
are taken in an euill net, and as the
birds that are caught in the snare,
so are the sonnes of men snared
in an euill time, when it falleth
suddenly vpon them.

It was (as *Platyn* conceiued)
the onely priuiledge of his dearnesse,
and the comfort of his pre-
sent heauenesse, that he only was
called with the King, to *Eifers*
banquet, when this onely was
meant for his bane ? The face of
this invitacion was faire, and pro-
mised much ; and howe the inge-
nious man begins to set good
constricctions vpon all events.
Surely (thinkes he) the King was
tyed in his honor to giue some
publique gratification to *Mordred*
woH
crai;

caſe; ſo good an office could deſerue no leſſe, then an houres glo‐
ry; But little doth my maſter
know what termes there are be‐
twixt me, and Mordecai; had he
fulli vnderſtood the iſfolencies
of thiſ Jew, and ſhould notwithstanding haue inioyned me to ho‐
nor him, I miſt haue had iuft
cauſe to complaine of diſgrace,
and diſparagement; but now,
ſince all thiſ buſineſſe hath beeſe
caried in ignorance, and caſualty,
vvhyl doe I wrong my ſelfe in be‐
ing too much affeeted vvithe that
vvhich was not ill meant? Had
either the King, or Queene, aban‐
doned ought of their fauour to thee,
I miſt haue diſred at home; now
this renued iuitation argues me
to ſtand right in the graſe of both;

And

And why may not I hope, this day, to meet with a good occasion of my desired reuenge? How iust will it seeme to the King, that the same man whó he hath publikely rewarded for his loyalty, should now bee publicuely punished for his disobedience?

With such like thoughts *Haman* cheares vp himselfe; and addresses himselfe to the royall banquett, with a countenance that wold faine seem to forget his mornings taske: *Esther* workes her face to an unwilling smile vpon that hatefull guest; and the King (as not guilty of any indignity that he hath put vpon his fauorite) frames himselfe to as much cheerfulness, as his want of rest would permit. The table is royally furnished

nished with all delicate confectiones, with all pleasing liquors : King *Ahasuerus* so eates , as one that both knew hee was , and meant to make himselfe, welcome : *Haman* so poures in , as one that meant to drowne his cares; And now, in this fulnesse of cheere, the King hungers for that long-delayed fuit of Queene *Ester*; Thrice,hath he graciously call'd for it; and(as a man constat to his owne fauours) thrice hath he,in the same words vowed the performance of it, though to the halfe of his Kingdome : It falls out oftentimes, that when large promises fall suddenly from great persons,they abate by leisure, and shrinke vpon cold thoughts; here King *Ahasuerus* is not more libe-
rall

rall in his offer, then firme in his resolutions ; as if his first word had beene, like his law, vnalterable. I am ashamed to misse that steddiness in Christians, which I finde in a Pagan. It was a great word that he had said, yet he eates it not, as ouer-lauishly spoken : but doubles, and trebbles it with hearty assurances of a reall prosecution ; whiles those tonges which profess the name of the true God, say, and vnsay at pleasure, recanting their good purposes, contradicting their owne iust engagments vpon no cause, but their owne changeableness.

It is not for Queene *Ester* to drive off any longer , the same wisedome that taught her to deferre her suit, now teaches her to pro-

propound it; A well chosen season is the greatest aduantage of any action; which as it is seldome found in hast, so is too often lost in delay: Now therefore with an humble and gracefull obeye-sance; and with a countenance full of modest feare, and sad grauity, she so deliuers her petition, that the King might see, it was necessity that both forc't it vpon her, & wrung it from her. *If I haue found fauour in thy sight O King, and if it please the King, let my life bee giuen me at my petition, and my people at my request:* Epectation is either a friend or an enemy, according to the occasion: *Ahasuerus* lookest for some high and difficult boon; now, that he heares his Queene beg for her life, it could not bee, but

but that the surplusage of his loue
to her must be turned into fury
against her aduersary ; and his
zeale must bee so much more
to her, as her suit was more meek
& humble. *For we are sold, I and my
people, to be destroyed, to be slaine, and
to perish ; but if we had beene sold for
bondmen, & bondwome, I had held my
tongue, although the enemy could not
counteruaile the Kings damage.* Craf-
ty men are sometimes choaked
with their owne plots. It was
the profer of ten thousand talents
wherewith *Haman* hoped both
to purchase his intended reuenge,
and the reputation of a worthy
patriot ; that summe is now laid
in his dish, for a iust argument of
malicious corruption ; for, well
might *Ester* plead, *If wee leves
de-*

deserued death, what needed our slaughter to be bought out? and if we deserued it not, what horrible cruelty was it to set a price upon innocent blood? It is not any offence of ours, it is the only despight of an enemy that hath wrought our destruction.

Besides, now it appeares the King was abused by mis-information; the aduersary suggested that the life of the Ierves could not stand with the Kings profit; whereas their very bondage should bee more damage to the state, than all Hamans worth could counteruaile. Truth may bee smothered, but it cannot dye; it may be disguised, but it will bee knowne; it may bee suppressed, but it will triumph.

N n

But

But what shall wee say to so harsh an aggravation? Could *Esther* haue bee[n]e silent in a case of decreed bondage; who is now so vehement in a case of death? Certainly, to a generous nature, death is farre more easie then bondage; why would she haue endured the greater, and yet so abhorr[es] the lesse? Was it for that the *Lewes* were already too well injured to captivity; and those exiles are more tolerable wherewith wee are acquainted: Or, was it for that there may be hopes in bondage, none in death? Surely, either of them were lamentable, and such as might deserve her humblest deprecation. *The Queene* was going on, to haue said, But, alas, nothing
But

will satisfie our bloody enemy,
saue the vtter extirpation of mee,
and my nation; when the impa-
tient rage of the King interrupts
her sentence in the midst, and (as
if he had heard too much already,
and could too easily supply the
residue of her complaint) snatches
the word out of her mouth, with
a furious demand; *Who is he, and
where is he that durst presume in his
heart to doe so?* It was the interest
of Queene *Esther's* person that rai-
sed this storme in *Ahasuerus*; set
that aside, how quietly, how me-
tally was the determined maffacre
of the *Jewes* formerly digested?
Actions haue not the same face
when we looke vpon them with
contrary affections.

Now Queene *Esther* musters

vp her inward forces, and with
an vndaunted courage, fixing her
angry eyes vpon that hated Aga-
gite, shee saies, *The aduersary, and
enemy is this wicked Haman.* The
word was loath to come forth,
but it strikes home at the last. Ne-
uer till now did *Haman* heare his
true title; Before some had stiled
him, noble; others great; some,
magnificent, and some perhaps,
virtuous; onely *Esther* gives him
his owne, wicked *Haman*; Ill-de-
seruing greatness doth in vaine
promise to it selfe a perpetuitie of
applause: If our waies be foule,
the time shall come, when after
all vaine flattery, after all our mo-
mentanie glory, our sins shall be
ript vp; and our iniuries laid be-
fore vs to our utter confusion.

With

With what consternation did Haman now stand? How doe we thinke he lookt to heare himselfe thus enstyled, thus accused, yea, thus condemned? Certainly, death was in his face, and horror in euery of his ioynts; no sense, no limme knowes his office: Faine would he speake, but his tongue falters, and his lips tremble; faine would he make apologies vpon his knees, but his hart failes him; and tells him the euidence is too great, and the offence aboue all pardon: Onely guiltinesse, and feare look through his eyes vpon the enraged countenance of his master, which now bodes nothing to him but reuenge, and death.

In what a passionate distem-

per doth this banquet shut vp? King *Ahasuerus* flyes from the table, as if hee had beeene hurried away with a tempest. His wrath is too great to come forth at his mouth; onely his eye tels *Haman* that he hates to see him, & vowes to see his dispatch: For solitarienesse, and not for pleasure, doth hee now walke into his garden; and thinkes with himselfe; What a monster haue I fauoured? Is it possible that so much cruelty and presumption should harbour in a brest that I thought ingenuous? Could I bee so bewitched as to passe so bloody a decree? Is my credulity thus abused by the trecherous subtlety of a miscreant whom I trusted? I confess it was my weake rashnesse to yeld

vnto so prodigious a motion, bur
it vvas the villany of this Agagite,
to circumuernt me by false sugge-
stions; He shall pay for my error,
the world shall see, that as I ex-
ceeded in grace, so I wil not come
short in justice. *Haman*, thy guilty
blood shall expiate that inno-
cent blood, which thy malice
might haue shed.

In the meane time, *Haman*, so
soone as ouer he could recouer the
qualme of his astonishment, fin-
ding himselfe left alone with
Queene Esther, looseth no time,
spareth no breath to mitigate her
anger, which had made way to
his destruction. Doubtlesse, with
many vowes, and teares, and de-
ierations, he labours to cleare his
intentions to her person; bewai-

ling his danger, imploring her
mercy, confessing the vnuit ex-
tent of his malice, profering in-
deators of satisfaction. Wretched
man that I am, I am condemned
before I speake, and when I haue
spoken, I am condemned. Upon
thy sentence, O Queene, I see
death awaits for me, in vaine
shall I seeke to auoid it. It is thy
will that I should perish; but let
that little breath I haue left, acquit
me so farre with thee, as to call
heauen and earth to record, that
in regard of thee, I dye innocent:
It is true that mine impetuous
malice miscarried me against the
nation of the Jewes, for the sake
of one stuppeine offender; but did
I know there was the least
drop of Israelitish blood in thy sa-
cred

cred person? could I suspect that Mordecai, or that people, did ought concerne thee? Let not one death be enough for me if I would ever haue entertained any thought of euill against nation, or man, that should haue cost but a frowne from thee: All the court of Persia can sufficiently witnesse how I haue magnified and adored thee, euer since the royll crowne was set on thy head; neither did I euer faile to doe thee all good offices vnto that my Soueraigne Master, whom thou hast now mortally incensed against me. O Queene, no hand can saue my life, but thine, that hath as good as bereaned it: Show mercy to him, that never meant but loyalty to thee: As euer thou
wouldst

wouldst oblige an humble and
faithfull vassall to thee, as euer
thou wwouldst honour thy name,
and sexe, with the praise of tender
compassion, take pitty vpon me,
and spare that life vwhich shall be
vowed to thy seruice: and, wher-
as thy displeasure may iustly al-
ledge against mee that rancorous
plot for the extirpation of that
people, vvhom I, too late, know
to be thine, let it suffice that I hate,
I curse mine owne cruelty; and
onely vpon that condition shall
beg the reprimall of my life, that I
shall worke, and procure by thy
gracious ayd, a full defeazance of
that vnjust execution. O let fall
vpon thy despairing servant one
word of fauour to my displeased
Master, that I may yet live. vol and
fibluoy

Whiles

Whiles bee vvas speaking to
this purpose, hauing prostrate
himselfe (for the more humilitie)
before the queene, and spread his
armes in a vchement imploration
vp to her bed; the King comes
in, and, as not vnwilling to mis-
construe the posture of him,
ywhom he now hated, saies, *What
will hee force the Queene also before
me in the house?* That vvhich Ha-
man meant as an humble suppli-
ant, is interpreted as from a pre-
sumptuous offender; How oft
might he haue done so, and more;
vwhiles he vvas in favour, vnicen-
sured? Actions are not the same
ywhen the man alters. As charity
makes a good sense of doubtfull
occurrents, so prejudice and dis-
pleasure takes all things (though
well-

well-meant) at the vvorst. It is an easie thing to picke a quarrell, vvhile vve intend a mischiefe.

The wrath of the King is as a messenger of death : Whiles these vwords were yet in the mouth of *Abasuerus, Haman*, in turning his head towards the King, is suddenly muzzled for his execution ; he shall no more see either face, or Sun : he shall bee seene no more but as a spectacle of shame, and horror : and now he thinkes, Wo is me whose eyes serue me onely to foresee the approach of a dishonourable, and painfull death ! what am I the better to haue beene great ? O that I had never beene, Oh that I could not be : How too truly haue *Zeresh* and my friends foretold me of this heavy destiny ?

Now

Now am I ready to feele what it
is that I meant to thousands of
innocents; I shall dye with paine
and ignominie: Oh that the con-
science of mine intended murder
could die with me. It is no marvel
if wicked men find nothing but
utter discomforts in their end:
rather then faile their former hap-
pinesse shall joyne with their im-
minent miseries, to torment them.
It is the iust judgement of God
that presumptuous sinners shold
be swallowed vp of those euills,
which they would not feare;
Happy is that man, who hath
grace to fore-see, and auoyd those
ways, which will lead him to a
perfect confusion. Happy is hee
that hath so liued that hee can ei-
ther welcome death as a friend,

or

or desie it as an enemy.

10 Who was euer the better for fauour past? those that had before kissed the feet, and smiled in the face of *Haman*, are now as ready to couer his head, and helpe him to the gallowes. *Harbonah* one of the Chamberlaines, seasonably tells the King how stately a gibbet *Haman* had newly set vp for well-deseruing *Mordecai*, within his owne palace.

I heare not one man open his mouth to intercede for the offender, to pacifie the King, to excuse or lesse the fact; every one is ready to pull him down that is falling, to trample on him that is downe, yet no doubt there were some of these Courtiers whom *Haman* had obliged; Had the cause been bet-

better, thus it would haue bee[n].
 Euery curre is ready to fall vpon
 the dog that he sees werryed; But
 here, it was the iust hand of God
 to set off all hearts from a man
 that had bee[n] so vnreasonably
 mercilesse; and to raise vp ene-
 mies (euен among frieds) to him,
 that had professed enmity to
 Gods Church: So let thine ene-
 mies perish, o Lord, vnsuceored,
 vnpitied. Then the King said, hang
 him thereon: There can bee no
 truer iustice then in retaliation;
 who can complaine of his own
 measure: Behold the wicked tra-
 uaileth with iniuity, and hath concei-
 ued mischiefe, and brought forth fals-
 hood. He made a pit and digged it, &
 is falle[n] into the ditch that hee made.
 His mischiefe shall returne vpon his

Psal.7.14.

owne head, and his violent dealing shal come downe vpon his owne pate.

There hangs Haman, in more reproch, then euer he stood in honor; and Mordecai (who is now first knowne for what hee was) succeeds his fauour, and changes inheritances with his enemy; for whiles Haman inherits the gibbet of Mordecai, Mordecai inherits the house and honor of Haman. O Lord, let the malice of the wicked come to an end, but establish thou the iustice of thy people.

One houre hath changed the face of the Persian Court; what stability is there in earthly greatness? He who in the morning all knees bowed vnto, as more then a man, now hangs vp like a despised vermin, for a prey to the rauens:

ravens : He, who this morning
was destin'd to the gallowes,
now rules ouer Princes ; neither
was it for nothing, that hee this
day rode in triumph : The Kings
ring that was taken from *Haman*,
is now giuen to *Mordecai*, as the
pledge of his authority ; and hee
that euен now sate in the gate, is
call'd vp next to the throne. Wi-
kednesse, and honest innocence
haue now payd their debts to
both their clients. Little joy woud it yet haue been
to *Ester*, that her enemy was
dead, her kinsman aduanced ; if
still her people must for all this
expect their fatall day : Her next
fuit therefore is for the safety of her
nation, in the countermand of
that bloody decree, which *Hau-*

man had obtained against them : That which was surreptitiously gotten ; and rashly giuen ; is so much more gladly reversed ; by how much mercy is more pleasing to a good nature, then cruell iniustice. Mordecai hath power to endite, seale, send out letters of fauor to the *Iewes*, vvhich were cauilely sentenched to the slaughter. If a Persian law might not be reuersed, yet it might be counter-charged : Mordecai may not write, Let no Iewe be slain ; he may write, Let the Iewes meet, and stand for their liues against those that would slay them. This command flyes after the former, so fast, as if it would ouer-take that go which it cannot recall. The Iewes are revived with this happy tyding,

that

O

that

that they may haue protection as well as enmity ; that authority will not be their executioner, that their owne hands are allowed to be their auengers.

Who would imagine that after publike notice of this alteration at the Court ; when the world could not choose but know the malicious ground of that wrongfull edict, the shamefull death of the procurer , the power of the party opposite ; any one should be found throughout all the provinces, that would once lift vp his hand against a Jew ? that, with his owne danger, would indeauer to execute a controlled decree ? The Church of God should cease to bee it selfe, if it wanted malicious persecution ;

O o 2 there

there needs no other quarrell then
the name, the religion of *Israel*.

Notwithstanding the known
fauour of the King, and the pa-
tronage of *Mordecai*, the thirteenth
of *Adar* is meant to be a bloody
day; *Haman* hath too many abet-
tors in the *Persian* dominions;
these ioyne together to performe
that sentence, whereof the author
repented: The *Leues* take hart to
defend themselues, to kill their
murtherers. All the prouinces are
turn'd into a field of ciuill war;
wherein innocence vanquisheth
malice. The *Leues* are victors, &
not onely are aliue, but are feared,
the most resist them not, many af-
fisst them, & some become theirs:
The countenance of the great
leads the world at pleasure; fear
of

of authority swayes thousands
that are not guilty of a conscience.

Yea, besides the liberty of defence, the *Iewes* are now made their owne Iusticers; That there may be none left from the loynes of that accursed *Agagite*, (who wold haue left none of the *Iewish* seed) they slay the ten sons of *Haman*; & obtaine new daies of further executions; Neither can death satisfie their reuege; those ten sons of *Haman* shall, in their very carcases beare the reproach of their father, and hang aloft vpon his gallowes.

Finally, no man doth, no man dares frown vpon a *Iew*; they are now becomne Lords in the midst of their captiuity; no maruell if they ordaine, and celebrate their

their ioyfull Purim, for a perpetuall memory, to all posterities, of their happy deliuernace. It were pity that the Church of God should not haue sun-shines, as well as stormes, and should not meet with interchanges of ioy in their warfare, before they enter vpon the vnchangeable ioy of their endlesse triumph.

FINIS.

3.21.
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Post-script to the READER.



May not but tell my Reader, there was a mistaking in the Post script of my late large volume; Wherein the Printer undertooke the Authors promise, to publish no more, till he should finish his whole labour, in a full second Tome. Whereas I onely yeelded, for the encouragement of the buyer, to adde nothing to the first. Should these haue stayed the leasure of my meditations upon the new Testament; Some readers would haue complained to bee held too long fasting; Euen this small intermission hath beeene call'd on with no small importunity of many; whose suggestion was no other then iust; that, as on the one side I might provide for the ease of many buyers by an entire publication: So, on the other side, I should discontent no fewer, who

Post-script to the Reader.

who having furnished themselves with the severall volumes of my Contemplations already published, should be forced to breake the suite, and to want the remaining parts. Out of these considerations, I was not unwilling to send forth these thoughts, after their fellowes; beseeching my reader not to hasten his expectation of my labours upon the residue of the new Testament, which, upon some priuate reasons, haue resolved to pace more slowly towards the publike light. God make these, and them, as profitable, as they are well meant to the Common good.

Faults of the Preffe.

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